

ECHOES
OF
A FAMOUS YEAR.

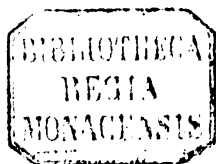
BY
HOLME LEE,
AUTHOR OF "FOR RICHER, FOR POORER," ETC.

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LEIPZIG
BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

1872.

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TO MY GOD-DAUGHTER,
ELIZABETH HARRIET WILLIAMSON.

MY DEAR LIZZIE,—

YOU love a book, and have read enough of history to be interested in these ECHOES OF A FAMOUS YEAR, though you are not of an age to study the newspapers on your own account.

All the political prophets say that the world has entered on an era of war and revolution, and that the young generation will behold great changes. These Echoes tell briefly the story of the greatest changes that have been in my day. I was pleased to catch them as they fell, because "the belief of the times is part of the record of the times"; and though grave and learned writers will repeat the wonderful tale with befitting dignity and a

thousand new lights and revelations on it by-and-by, these Echoes will not lose their ring of truth.

To you, therefore, and to others who are young like you, I commend them. If they are not so charming as a fairy tale this Christmas-time, yet welcome them. In your elderhood you will like to listen to them once in ten years, perhaps, as everybody likes to listen to an old story and an old song.

Your loving Godmother,

HARRIET PARR.

(HOLME LEE.)

1871.

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ECHOES OF A FAMOUS YEAR.

I.

The Challenge.

July 17, 1870.

"So there is to be war," said my friend.

It was on our way up the Manor Lane to church. The summer morning was all glorious, multitudinous thick leaves rustled softly, a low wind stirred the flowering grasses, the birds were garrulous in the thorn trees that shadow the western windows. Upon the old walls burnt a fervid sun, filling the aisles with fragrant, drowsy warmth. Beyond the porch lay a vision of beautiful peace—a silver span of sea, broad screens of foliage, and the faint dimness of cottage fires.

Prayer, praise, thanksgiving, I heard them all in a dream.

"Come unto Me, ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you," said the preacher. It was a strange voice, and broke the spell for the moment; but the sermon was familiar, a hum of platitudes that have rocked us asleep many and many a time: "This is an evil world, but there is another where the children of God shall have rest."

Almost one is tempted to cry out that the Christian philosophy is a failure, in view of the sudden confusion that is come upon the world!

We had felt never more quiet.

Only since yesterday! Yesterday came the news—war between France and Prussia. For one little week we have been standing at gaze—wondering, fearing, hoping, trembling; and now we know the worst. “War is declared: an unjust, but premeditated war. This dire calamity which overwhelms Europe with dismay is the act of France, of one man in France, the Emperor Napoleon III.”

The pretext is the Spanish succession. The forfeited throne of Isabella II. still goes a-begging. Spain would accept a German prince, but Napoleon interposes his veto. He is master in Europe, and no German shall be king in Spain by leave of him. Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern, invited to the perilous eminence, and not much desiring it, was easily said nay; but it is not enough that he retires,—the Head of the Family must apologise for his presumption in daring to be even thought of, and promise that he shall be thought of no more; or the sword shall settle it. The Head of the Family happens to be King William of Prussia, an old soldier, whose lips do not frame themselves readily to such apologies and such promises.

Here is the popular story of the challenge.

It was in the Kursaal gardens at Ems. King William was walking with his gentlemen, all at leisure, taking the air amidst the loungers and fashionable gossips of the spa. Brusquely to him

advances Count Benedetti, the French ambassador to the Prussian court (a diplomatist with twenty years' experience of courts), and accosts the King with a reminder that he waits for a reply to his imperial master's demand. Says the King, "There is *no* reply," and walks on. The fine ladies and gentlemen stand aghast. Something serious impends. But few are seers enough to see the dreadful thunder-cloud of war gathering over their pretty pleasure garden in the gay summer afternoon.

The telegraph, swifter than any bird, carries the matter to Berlin, to Chancellor Bismarck, the King's right-hand man. Bismarck understands that this time Napoleon means to force a breach, and his staying policy is at an end. The story is printed. By dusk it is in the mouths of all the people. An excited multitude assembles in the square before the royal palace, furious at the insult offered to their king, and shouting with heart and voice: "War! war! To the Rhine!"

"War! war! To the Rhine!" is also the cry in Paris.

In default of apology, the Emperor will have a quarrel.

"So be it!" says King William, "and God defend the right."

The champions, girding themselves for the battle, are at this moment only two: France, jealous of the growth of German unity, bent on setting the German tribes at fray, that she may clutch for herself in the *melée* the long coveted Rhine frontier; and Prussia, swearing in her anger that since she is driven to

the field she will not sheathe her sword until the ancient provinces of Alsace and Lorraine are recovered to the Fatherland.

But how long can we reckon on the war being a duel? Already France has attempted to fasten a quarrel upon Belgium as a partner in the Hohenzollern intrigue; and Austria has announced that she will hold her hand only while the original disputants are unbacked by any supporter.

"The Empire is Peace," said Napoleon III.; and while the gutters of Paris ran blood, and thousands of prisoners were sailing to exile and death in the pestilential regions of Cayenne, the cowed and weary people hailed the strong man armed as the saviour of society. And Europe has had war at brief intervals ever since; for twenty years war and unrest! This has society suffered under her saviour, whose motto for practical purposes is: "Strike suddenly, and strike hard." Russia, Austria in Italy, and Mexico have heard it—and Germany shall hear—if his star be propitious.

Already French troops are moving towards the Rhine; Algiers is sending home thousands of her seasoned soldiers, the reserves are called out, the arsenals resound with the din of armaments. Prussia is farther off: we cannot so well see what she is doing, but we are very sure she is not sleeping while her enemy is watching for the spoil.

And in England how are we affected? There is a panic on the Stock Exchange; there are many failures, and more fears. The Queen, at Osborne, telegraphs to Prince and Princess Christian, on the

eve of a trip to Germany, that they had better stay at home. The Princess of Wales, who went to Denmark last week to visit her father and mother, is summoned to return. What next? How long before the war-fever catches us?

II.

The Proclamation of War.

It is noteworthy that the Emperor issued his proclamation of war on the fifteenth of July, St. Swithin's day, the anniversary of the fall of the Bastille, the first great day of the Great Revolution,—an ominous anniversary, which the madcap Paris students inopportunistly bethought themselves of, and celebrated by marching arm-in-arm, in bands, along the boulevards, singing at the top of their wild voices that dear old revolutionary hymn, the "*Marseillaise*"; while the hysteric mob yelled in shrill chorus, "*Vive la Guerre! A Berlin! Vive la Guerre!*"—as if, poor souls, *la guerre* could mean anything but misery to them!

Is the war with consent of the nation, or is it *not*?

When the Emperor's challenge to Prussia was announced in the Legislative Chamber, old Thiers spoke up against it: "The occasion is ill chosen; let the world judge."

The occasion *is* ill chosen, the pretext *is* too poor. But the cruel jealousy that France has of her neighbours is bred and fed by the teaching and policy of Thiers, and such as he. And what a

mean policy it is—to make France the chief and the strongest, not by her own virtue and ableness, but by disuniting and diminishing all who might rival her. Say that Napoleon wanted to divert some danger at home, and found no way so easy as a foreign war; the train was ready laid; he had but to apply the torch, and, swift, all is in a flame! The Chamber has voted fuel in abundance, men and money enough to keep it going merrily; but do the deputies represent the people? That is the question. Gambetta, Jules Favre, Arago, and a few others of the Left, uttered their voices to the same purpose as Thiers; but what were they against the immense majority, delirious with previsions of glory and conquest?

For the moment it seems as if the war were popular; but it is so easy to get up a cry, excitement is so contagious. It is not the men who fight, nor the men who pay for the fighting, that are vociferous to set on war. The peasants, who will have to fill up the gaps in the army, desire only to be let live in peace. The *plébiscite* that was taken in the spring, to verify the general contentment with the Emperor's rule, was understood to promise peace. The conscription is their incubus, because it robs them of their sons; and the conscription must feed the war.

All Frenchmen will fight of course. It will be with them as it would be with us in the like case: "Our country, right or wrong!" But onlookers in Paris, who keep their senses amidst the clamour, assure us that the demonstrations in favour of the

war, though full of sound and fury, have very little heart. The fiery enthusiasm of the "*Marseillaise*" does not catch all spirits. How should it? What more absurd paradox than the "*Marseillaise*" to-day? When Rouget de Lisle made it, France was threatened with the coming back of her emigrant princes and nobles, supported by foreign arms, to restore the tyranny and bad privileges that the Revolution had abolished. But who dreamed of meddling with France a week ago? Who would have disturbed her peace if Napoleon had not been of a mind to break it? Not King William. Not Bismarck, that able man. Peace was serving the interests of Prussia well: war, if it be a winning war, may serve them too, but not better.

Thiers receives thanks from all parts of the empire for his bold opposition to the government party in the Legislative Chamber. Men of true foresight begin to understand that the unification of Germany is too far advanced for France to hinder it, and they denounce the madness of the quarrel. Some do not scruple to attribute it to the perils that Napoleon personally fears. There is much leaven in Paris of men given to change, and this leaven has been working dangerously of late. In the *plébiscite* there was a large proportion of adverse votes, adverse votes of soldiers even. At this crisis, we are told, martial ardour in the army shows itself most amongst the officers; it will pervade the ranks when they smell powder, so they hope. His cousin Pierre did the Emperor no good when he made a martyr of the young republican journalist, Victor Noir, by

way of avenging the family on its enemies of the press; nor did the imperial ministers of justice do him good when they acquitted the assassin. The recent petition of the Orleans princes, for leave to return to France, has reminded the world of their existence, and of their judicious conduct in exile. That the Emperor quakes for the stability of his dynasty, and lets loose the dogs of war to save it, is vehemently asserted.

"He seeks to cement his cracking throne with German blood," say the Germans, as with indignant sorrow they get them ready to fight.

Many in England think the same. Our Queen has remonstrated with the Emperor that he has no ground of quarrel with Prussia because of Spain. To which, in diplomatic phrase, the Emperor has answered: "France knows her own affairs best."

Does she? Would to God she knew them only well enough not to be led blindfold into mischief! His proclamation to the people is a triumph of phrase-making and mendacious cant.

"There are solemn moments in the life of peoples when the national honour dominates all interests, and alone takes in hand the direction of the destinies of the country. . . . Prussia has made no account of our good wishes and our forbearance. . . . She has turned Europe into a camp, where nothing but uncertainty and fear of the morrow reigns. . . . It is left for us to confide our destinies to the decision of arms. . . . We wish to conquer a lasting peace, based on the true interests of peoples, and to put an end to the precarious state in which

all nations employ their resources to arm themselves one against another. . . . May God bless our efforts. A great people which defends a just cause is invincible."

"A great people which defends a just cause is invincible!"

So prophesies the Emperor Napoleon—against his nation and against himself. The just cause is with his enemy; the just cause is with Germany.

III.

On the German Part.

YES, the just cause is with Germany. I will not recall that word. I believe the end will maintain it.

From London, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Hull, Bristol, from all our populous commercial centres where they most do congregate, the Germans are flocking home by hundreds and by thousands. They would forfeit their nationality did they not return to the defence of the Fatherland against invasion. And never, since Jena, has it been in such peril as now. So loyal sons of their country exchange pen and counting-house for sword and battle-field; leave dear home and wife and children for the rude cheer and comradeship of the camp.

German patriotism kindles fast into enthusiasm. Since the flag is unfurled the Berlin mob shouts as valorously as the mob of Paris.

But the two sovereigns recognise that it is a weighty matter they have taken in hand.

Says the Emperor, congratulated on the perfection to which he has brought the armament and organisation of his army, while waiting four years for this opportunity: "We are entering on a serious struggle, and France needs the co-operation of all her children."

Says King William, thanked by the town-council of Berlin for his prompt vindication of the honour and independence of the country: "God knows I am not answerable for this war." Many sacrifices will be required from my people, but I know what I may expect from the army, and from those who are preparing to join it.

"Long live the King!" cried the burghers. "Long live the King!"

He is an old man, seventy-three years old; but it seems that his work is not yet done. He has witnessed many changes and sorrows, and the fall and rising again of many royal houses. He was at the signing of the Great Peace in Paris, fifty-six years ago, when the great Napoleon was overthrown. And his life has come round to the same point; he is challenged to fight the hereditary quarrel over again, to try which is the stronger, France or Germany, and who shall have the Rhine. Well may he go to it heavily! They tell it of him that after the battle of Sadowa he rode over the field, and seeing what his victory had cost in soldiers' lives and more cruel agony of wounds, he vowed never to draw sword again, unless in defence of the nation that God had given him to keep. Surely the call has come! Who believes that France could be pro-

pitiated by fair words now? She believes herself invincible, in her vain-glorious dreams is conqueror already. King William has no choice but to defend and protect Germany. He must needs do that,—he, the chief of her most powerful tribe,—or see her trampled, broken, and fettered once more by her ever-restless, aggressive neighbour.

Whilst Paris that lives in the streets is loud and jubilant, all Germany goes to prayers and humbles herself under the mighty hand of God. Half a century of blessings and quiet rest has not worn out the remembrance of sufferings that went before. War is very dreadful to her; its scars are everywhere left upon the land.

But she has a good hope. She trusts in herself and the Eternal. In this war France will have to meet the whole German nation—not scattered in feeble tribes, distrusting one another, and easy to destroy; but in a compact phalanx, moved by one heart and brain. Soon as the challenge had gone forth, Bavaria cast in her lot with Prussia. Next came Saxony, Hesse, Baden, Würtemberg. The little and weak ones of the people have found courage and confidence in the strength of Prussia, and will go to the war led by King William's son, "Fritz"—a captain who has already seen hard campaigns and helped at the winning of famous victories. United, they may arrest a French invasion. God grant it! We know the horrors of that in many an old story. Perhaps they may teach France the wisdom of keeping at home. They make no brag, but there is a sober determination among them that augurs

firm fighting and constancy to endure all the trials and eventualities of a most cruel and wicked war.

IV.

At Home.

July 21.

WE have not had such a fragrant hot summer, such lovely evenings out of doors, for years. Last night we sat in the Chine House garden till past ten o'clock. Anna Müller came and stood fair-haired in the twilight, gazing wistfully over the sea. Her wedding is to be celebrated next week, and the honeymoon was to have been spent amongst her own people; but they are in Hesse, on the Rhine frontier, and she must give that up. Until when? until the war is over—such meddlesome idle mischief, to spoil poor Anna's wedding!

Ah! but it will spoil many weddings, it will widow many wives, make thousands of children fatherless; that is the pity of it! Germany takes her stoutest soldiers from the hearth; every man is bred to arms, and liable to fight in his turn. Unlike the soldiers of France, who may give no hostages to fortune until their term of service is ended, till they go home to their native fields, turn swords into ploughshares, and spears into pruning-hooks.

The French armies are drawing towards Metz, that ancient and famous city, where there is a vast camp and fortress, improved and enlarged in recent years for the assembling and massing of troops on the road to Germany—or for their refuge in case

of need, falling back before the enemy. The Prussians meanwhile are preparing Kehl against the Emperor's advance. The bridge of boats has been removed, and the iron bridge cut. How well I remember crossing it one sunny afternoon on the way to Heidelberg!

We wait the event, and the vaticinations of some of us are very gloomy. That the French *must* win, at the outset if not in the long-run, is the favourite opinion. Plead that they richly deserve to be beaten, and have at least a chance of it, and you are out of the fashion. The Emperor is *so* fortunate, his battalions are *so* big, his marshals such mighty men of valour! "Glory be to success!" shouts the multitude; and falls down straightway, and worships the brazen image that will one day crush them perhaps.

O the *ifs* of this canny queer world! Hearken to a dismal Jeremiah prophesying against England.

"If the Emperor should go beyond his uncle, and, after conquering Germany, land an army on our southern coast, with gold and silver in their purses to pay their way, the people would let them march forward to London unhindered. The north folk might have more pluck; but we have cultivated international relations so assiduously in the interest of trade, that there is no patriotism, no real love of country left amongst us."

How I long to cry "Fudge!" with Mr. Burchell!

Conquer Germany! Invade England! These be brave words, my masters, but sooner said than

done. I adhere to that ancient, well proven maxim of our nation, that one Englishman is a match for four Frenchmen any day,—and hold it petty treason to deny the fact!

Heigho! but it is a sad-hearted time, and not to jest at.

Our turn may come, and soon—who can tell? This war broke upon us without warning. Therefore it behoves us to be insured, to stand to our guard, calm, steady, and ready. I have faith in the fellows in fustian. They are the best material for soldiers in the world, and we know by bright example that the dandies can show them how to fight and how to die. Remember the Six Hundred of Balaclava—heroes for valour, martyrs for discipline: then dare to fear that Englishmen will not fight for their own.

And as for money: all the money in the country is as good as in the Queen's pocket if there were any question of its defence against a foreign foe. Is there a man in the land who would deny her his cattle, or his house, or anything that is his, if there was a menace of invasion, and she had need of them? If there be, he is a mouse and not a man.

O for an hour of Elizabeth amongst the panic-mongers! how she would scatter them, set a mark upon them, beware of putting them in place of trust or post of honour.

This afternoon was held the Midsummer school-feast. We could not have had a more perfect day,

for the brilliant heat of the sun was tempered by a constant breeze from the downs. There were three hundred children, big and little, in the parsonage garden and the manor field, and all the gentility of the parish to wait upon them. The good old rector and his wife received the young things on the turfed steps leading to the slope under the great elm-trees. What a pretty touching scene it was, what a happy episode in these unquiet days, when no man can predict what the morrow may bring forth!

There is quite a hail of false rumours. They fly through the air, fall, melt away, and are forgotten. Here and there, one, heavier than the general shower, causes a crash, a disaster. That Russia had declared against France—that British troops were instantly to be despatched to Belgium, made confusion worse confounded on the Stock Exchange a week ago. Good-luck, startled out of breath, let a score of bubble-fortunes collapse.

Flour has risen seven shillings a sack. This will the laborious poor feel. The calamities of war smite some of them to the ground. The north-east coast of Scotland, where the herring-fishery was about to begin, is threatened with destitution. Prussia is its chief market for herrings, and the trade, which in a favourable season employs some 40,000 souls, is brought to a dead-lock; for the German ports are shut up, the sea-marks, buoys, and lights removed, and French cruisers are on the watch in the Channel and the North Sea

to intercept ships carrying commodities to the enemy.

V.

A Portent.

July 22.

TRAGICAL news from across the Atlantic!

M. Prevost-Paradol, the lately appointed envoy from France to the United States, has killed himself.

What put him on that act of despair? Previsions of ruin for his country—rage against himself that he had taken service under a sovereign whom, till the other day, he distrusted, whose persecution he suffered because he had the courage of his opinions, and refused to be silent against his personal government?

M. Prevost-Paradol was a true lover of his country, a good Frenchman, who had faith in her right use of freedom if she could get it, and would not acknowledge as safe any government depending on the pleasure, the wisdom, the justice, and the life of a single man. His character was high, his influence wide, but no journal of Paris could promulgate his political sentiments without falling under the cloud of official discountenance. *The Times* afforded him in England the liberty that is impossible under the imperial *régime* in France; and he wrote on its staff constantly until the recent conversion of the Emperor to parliamentary principles gave him hope of better days. He was won over, and consented to serve Napoleon as his

minister to the United States. He had reached his destination, but had not entered on the formal duties of his mission, when the telegraph flashed the amazing news of the Emperor's declaration of war with Prussia all round the world. What he felt on it those who knew him may conjecture. He was out of the way, was helpless for France—remorseful perhaps that he must seem to his countrymen as one of those who have betrayed their principles, and been deluded into making-believe a lie. For this iniquitous war is surely the latest birth of Napoleon's despotism. His ministers, professing responsibility, have had no voice in the matter. They let him do, however, since he will do; and M. Olivier, the chief of them, laughs in the face of Europe, and announces that he goes into the war with a light heart.

Light hearts such as his, and self-will like his master's, have brought nations to a fall before now.

Here is a forecast of events from "*La France Nouvelle*," published by M. Prevost-Paradol in 1867:—

"Never, in the history of the world, has ascendancy or leading influence on human affairs passed from one state to another without a supreme struggle. . . . On the supposition that Prussia were victorious, it is easy to see that such an occurrence would be the death of the greatness of France, though the nation would not be destroyed. . . . Some rectification of our frontier to the advantage

of Prussia—the sad prelude to still greater—would be the immediate effect of our reverses. . . . Germanic unity, hastened and pushed forward by the force and prestige of Prussian victories, would at once burst forth. . . . Yes, France is destined to pay every way: with the blood of her sons if she conquers; with her greatness, and perhaps with her national existence, if she succumbs.”

That the writer of this grave warning had not fortitude to wait and see the end is a portent of what that end will be.

VI.

“Our Faithful Ally.”

July 27.

By way of war news, *The Times* solemnly presents to the world the draft of a secret treaty, as proposed between France and Prussia. Whence it comes we are not told, but its authenticity is vouched for, and students of contemporary history are invited to judge it on its merits. It is given in the French text, which is in the handwriting of M. Benedetti.

The pith of it is soon extracted. It stipulates for the recognition by the Emperor Napoleon of German unity, apart from Austria, in consideration of King William's moral support in the acquisition of Luxembourg, by purchase from Holland, and his active assistance against all comers who shall oppose the conquest of Belgium.

Some of us have read it in blank astonishment.

"It is a myth! it is an invention! it is a trick of Bismarck's. Our faithful ally could never have it in his heart to play us false!" *Hum!*

We are pledged to the protection of Belgium. We should be the chief of all comers who might consider it their duty or interest to resist the Emperor's little predatory scheme. And assuredly England would resist it.

Our faithful ally! our friend! Ally and friend just so long as we serve his purpose; just so long as we are necessary to keep him in his slippery place. Our betrayer and foe to-morrow, if war with England would answer his ends better than peace.

Holland and Belgium manifest no surprise at the conspiracy to break into their houses; but they are diligently looking to their locks and bolts, and strengthening their police. And so are we. Woolwich is all astir—never such commotion since the Crimean days. The secret treaty is in all mouths. We are led to infer that the first sketch of it was made after Sadowa, in a demand on the part of France for the Rhenish provinces, to redress the balance of power which the Prussian successes against Austria had seriously compromised. Bismarck, with his work of German unity almost consummated, was not likely to surrender the jewels of the Rhine; but we can quite fancy him suggesting to Benedetti, with sardonic humour, that he might take Belgium instead—if he could; Bismarck being perfectly aware that our leave would have to be asked for that. M. Bernstorff, the Prussian ambas-

sador in London, gives out that the matter was kept secret in the interests of peace, until the peace being broken there was no longer any motive for concealment.

For three years or more it would seem that King William and Bismarck have held Napoleon in play, hoping that time might bring him wiser counsels, but arming meanwhile, lest war should prove inevitable. It is upon us now, and they throw before the world the terms on which the Emperor would consent to sell Germany a longer peace.

It is the quarrel of Europe that Germany is going to fight. France needs a lesson, and I believe she will get it. This plot for the seizure of Belgium is a crime as conscienceless as any the great Napoleon had to expiate in his bitter captivity. It has filled us with distrust, and louder than ever is the cry that we ought to be ready for the worst event, as well insured against invasion as prescient householders are against fire. Invasion may not come, and fire may not come; but the assurance that we shall not sustain ruinous loss if they do is worth far more than the premium to be paid.

Yes: we ought to be ready to protect our little ally; and to have our own island so well girdled about with ships, that dark conspirators may be restrained from so much as winking against our sweet security.

Is this our state of preparedness, or are we tending thereto?

Panic shrieks that we are not prepared at all, *nor* preparing. Panic clamours that our defence is out of gear; that if we are threatened we cannot fight but must eat dirt. Veteran admirals and generals amuse their retired leisure by making ugly shadows on the wall to terrify us. I wish they could find a more cheerful game to play at. Fear is catching, and a habit of fear is a miserable thing.

Observe children in a louring thunder-storm; if they have one of resolute quiet bearing amongst them, they are still, they have courage, they go on with their innocent work or sport, hushed may be, and awed, but prompt to obey when bidden. See the same children with a timorous person; they are all agitation and distress, they cower together, are fretful, angered, and afraid: come a danger, and they are unmanageable.

Now a nation that has not fallen into contempt of its rulers and care-takers stands to them in the relation of children to guardians. Is there any real ground for alarming the nation? Or are the veteran admirals and generals on a level with naughty nurses who, for private ends of their own, sustain the legend of bogie?

The men and women of this age have grown up in the traditional faith that Britons never shall be slaves; that the Queen is a brave lady; that ministers are men of honour; that the navy is invincible, and the army good against the world. Ugly shadows will not frighten us: we have seen

the lightning, heard the thunder, been safe kept in divers perils.

But ugly shadows scare children, cling to their imaginations, haunt them in the dark, make them tremble where no fear is. Breed the young generation in an atmosphere of panics, and what will their manhood be?

One might safely predict that there would come trouble in their days!

But in these there is an immense ballast of common-sense, of pluck, energy, and honest confidence. The people are not suspicious that the Government will betray them. The Government has no doubt that the people will strengthen its hands for whatever work may arise.

England can look her faithful ally boldly in the face, and dare him, if he be evilly disposed, to do his worst.

For she is sure her sons will do their duty.

VII.

A Prophecy.

July 28.

"PUNCH" amongst the prophets!

In his cartoon to-day Tenniel represents the Emperor and his son riding together in the twilight, across the low country Rhinewards. The boy is eagerly pointing to the river, and inquiring what means that wrestle of men and horses overturned in the stream; while the Emperor regards with eyes of unfathomable gloom a spectral shape in his path,

—his uncle on his famous white charger, one hand uplifted, warning him *Beware!*

They have gone to the war—Napoleon and the young Prince: after long delay, gone from St. Cloud to Metz. It is two slow weeks since the declaration of hostilities. We expected a more rapid despatch of business after M. Rouher's boastful felicitation to his master that France was so perfectly prepared, so very ready to fight. Is it possible they have miscalculated her forces? The Emperor loftily announces (what all the world knows) that he has no allies, and protests that he wants none; but he is understood to have experienced a harsh surprise at the prompt attitude to withstand him taken by Hanover and the South German states.

This delay has given Germany an advantage in time that she can scarcely have hoped for. Her armies are mobilised now. They are three: the army of the King, the army of the Crown Prince, and the army of Prince Frederick-Charles. Old General von Falkenstein, who fought in the wars against the great Napoleon, is left at home to guard the coast; upon which the French fleet meditates a grand descent.

The Empress Eugénie, to whom is ascribed a loud voice in favour of this war, went to Cherbourg to address the sailors previous to their departure for the Baltic. The squadron left on Sunday, and passed in line before Dover the next day at noon, steaming northwards. Seven ironclads. Crowds of people assembled on the cliffs to see them go by.

Other war ships are reported in the Channel, and off the east coast of Scotland, on the look-out for home-bound merchantmen, which in mid-Atlantic can have no notice of the peril awaiting them in the narrow seas. Rewards are offered to pilots who can communicate with any to put them on their guard.

The Emperor takes the command-in-chief of the French army—the Army of the Rhine, as it is named. For his major-general, he chooses Marshal Lebœuf, a cherubic person, and prime favourite of court ladies. Marshal Bazaine, of Mexican notoriety, Marshal Macmahon, the victor of Magenta, and Marshal Canrobert, of Crimean fame, have each a post of honour. Generals Ladmirault, Frossard, and De Failly hold high commands. The Imperial Guard, which is at Nancy, has General Bourbaki for its leader. Camps of infantry, cavalry, and artillery, with vast stores of material, are concentrated at Metz—the stronghold and defence of France between the Rhine and the Meuse.

There are rumours of a skirmish, of a first blow struck, of the first blood drawn; but we know not how, when, or where. Gentlemen of the press are not permitted to follow the French armies, and our Cabinet forbids British officers to resort as special correspondents to either camp. We are therefore not likely to have much accurate intelligence of the conduct of the war, unless newspaper editors can lay hold of a few soldiers retired from service, and gifted with a literary knack. The journalists of Paris are condemned, under tremendous penalties,

to publish no news but what is communicated to them officially. So Paris will hear only what the Emperor may think it judicious to tell her. He treats his people as foolish parents treat their children when they deceive them, as they say, for their good.

In the absence of nobler incidents to record, the newspaper correspondents give us their own adventures and gossip about the mitrailleuse, the chassepot, and the needle-gun—those cunning implements of destruction which science has forged in the devil's service. At Mentana the chassepot did wonders; at Sadowa the needle-gun was king; in this war, the mitrailleuse, the Emperor's pet, is expected to do most deadly execution.

We have Napoleon's word for it that he means to conduct the war like a gentleman and a Christian; that he goes forth to civilise Germany and set her free,—with his wild Turcos out of Algeria to help in the pious mission.

Tartuffe may now doff his beaver, and say: "After your majesty!"

VIII.

Baptism of Fire.

August 4.

FRANCE and Prussia have met, have exchanged fire, and Prussia has drawn back,—to spring the better, I hope and pray!

It was not a battle, and only Paris calls it a victory. It was a grand military promenade, with

guns shotted, for the purpose apparently of giving the little Prince a taste of blood. The affair was at Saarbrück, a small open town on the German side of the frontier. A few Prussians occupied it, with orders to retire, fighting, if the French attacked. A body of troops, under General Frossard, had spent several days taking possession of the wooded heights above the town; and last Tuesday (August 2), after breakfast, the Emperor and the Prince came over from Metz to set the war going. A battery of mitrailleuses was mounted, and the Prince fired the first shot. Then elder hands took up the work, and by-and-by smoke and flame rose in the town. The Prussians drew off, returning the fire as they went. A spent bullet dropped near the Prince. He picked it up, scratched his name on it, and gave it as a keepsake to a comrade.

“Old soldiers wept to see him.”

The affair lasted two hours. When it was over, the Emperor and the Prince went back to Metz to dinner; and in the evening the Emperor wrote to the Empress that their son had sustained his baptism of fire that day without flinching.

Prince Loulou is fifteen years old; he goes to the war, says his father, that he may learn betimes what are the duties his name imposes on him. God of mercies, deliver us all!

I begin to comprehend the detestation and terror that pursued the great Napoleon in his reverses, and consigned him to pitiless exile at St. Helena when he fell. For his name's sake is young Louis to tread the same accursed round?

Shall Europe be drenched in blood again, to teach this princeling his duty? The Emperor and his wife are a valiant-tongued pair! If they could be clapped up in a cage securely, they and all of their kind, it is not I would be sorry or release them!

IX.

News by the Way.

THE corn stands uncut in our quiet fields, but it looks ripe for the sickle. In the Palatinate and the valley of the Saar, where French invaders ever break first into Germany, the crops have ripened early, and men, women, and children have been toiling every day and all day long, and Sundays and holidays, to gather in the harvest, their pastors leading the reapers. God help them, poor souls! God help and deliver them!

On the cliff this evening the sunset was magnificent, and the sea, smooth as glass, was dotted with pleasure-boats. The singers were practising in the church, and the roll of the organ and music of sweet voices added a charm of holy softness and tranquillity to the twilight.

In the verandah we sat and talked,—my lady, the rector, and I.

The war is a nightmare. It absorbs all thoughts. Personal interests dwindle in the presence of a calamity so immense, so momentous to the world at large. And not personal interests only, but measures

of public utility, and events which, in ordinary times, would have raised a clamour throughout Christendom.

The Education Bill is before Parliament; but when the luxurious civilisation of France and the intellectual might of Germany submit themselves to the wager of battle, we are cruelly reminded that salvation is not in the knowledge of good and evil.

Two days after Napoleon threw down the gauntlet to King William, the dogma of Papal Infallibility was promulgated in the church of St. Peter at Rome, with salvoes of artillery and salvoes of thunder. Then immediately the bishops assembled at the Council began to disperse, to fly home before the air becomes too thick with bullets and battle-smoke to see the way. An old man proclaims himself omniscient on earth, as God in heaven, and Christendom, in uproar, laughs and lets him say!

Graceful fair Margaret came home with ruffled hair from her breezy ride in the cool of the day. "It was so beautiful over the downs! . . . Oh, think of France! think of Germany! There has been a battle. They had just heard the news at the post when I rode by!"

"On which side is the victory?"

"I did not ask—only there has been a battle, with great slaughter. And the Prussians are in France!"

"Then *they* must have won the victory!"

X.

Weissemburg.

August 6.

SCORE the first victory to "Fritz"! "A brilliant but bloody victory."

It was at Weissemburg it befel, a frontier town of France. On Wednesday, the day after Prince Loulou went out to Saarbrück to receive his baptism of fire.

The Crown Prince broke upon the French by surprise, killed Abel Douay, their general in command, took their encampment, one of their guns, and eight hundred prisoners—the majority unwounded men. Douay's division was the advance guard of Macmahon's *corps d'armée*, and was outnumbered by the enemy; so 'tis said.

"You do not know, you can have no conception of the wickedness of Bismarck!" cries my impressive friend who is the partisan of France.

Without pretending to take Bismarck's measure, I suggested that we should agree to differ upon that.

The wickedness of Bismarck! The craft of Bismarck! He has not one virtue in the eyes of those who love the Emperor. A Cromwell, with much humour, from the resolute set face of him, and the force of his political master-strokes. For his motives and intentions we need no subtle interpretation. What is done we know; and, in part, what is resisted. If Bismarck had wanted war to fuse his Germany,

he could have had it last year on account of Luxembourg. That the war is of his seeking, and his forcing on, I will not concede. There is not a tittle of evidence to shake my conviction that it is Napoleon's doing, *his*, cheered forward by the Empress and the marshals, and the imperial party in the Legislative Chamber.

This check at Weissemburg will cause them to reflect.

We are all reflecting. A sudden impetus is given to our imaginations by passing events. Here were we, dwelling at ease, dreaming no evil. In a moment bursts the storm upon Europe, and we are all at sea! Never mind! We have been at sea before; we are at home in troubled waters. Our statesmen are skilled and courageous navigators, and can be trusted to steer the ship amidst the shoals and quicksands and cross currents, to keep it off the rocks and clear of the whirlpool, and to bring it safe into port with colours flying; can and must be trusted, let the winds blow as they list.

Weissemburg foretells that France will find she has enough on her hands with Germany.

Let her beware of meddling with Belgium, unless she be prepared to have also to do with England. It is the hearty desire of the nation to hold off from war, unless honour be impeached; to give honour the go-by would be a confession of weakness that would imperil our own security and invite attack. Therefore the Queen's government expresses the will of the nation when it announces to all whom it

may concern that we will fight for Belgium if need be, that prosperous, well-managed, inoffensive little kingdom of our compacting. Leave it to others to boast and vaunt their heady valour. If we be slow, it is because we would be just, and we know that our arm is heavy when it strikes. Our attitude towards the mysterious contrivers of the predatory treaty need be but the attitude of a wary constable, watching the mouth of a den of thieves, and not afraid to batter the crown of the first rogue who ventures out to try whether the coast be clear for his nefarious operations. The fiction of a peace at any price policy is exploded. We are willing to allow that the rogue has his place in creation, since we find him there; but we have quite made up our minds that no rogue shall rough-ride Europe while we have sea-dogs to chase him down.

XI.

Our Neutrality.

THE thousand irresponsible critics, foreign and domestic, are thrusting at England with blunt platitudes on her neutrality, but they have not yet discovered a treacherous joint in her armour. She has proved it, and has confidence to sit still. God strengthens the bars of her gates, and gives her peace in her borders. And by His help she will maintain it. France and Germany have gone into this war on a bad old quarrel of their own, and let them fight it out. They cannot show cause

why she should take a side, and none of her sons are willing to die for either. So there's an end on't.

But how they must suffer in times like this who govern men and bear a conscience! who have wisdom, understanding, and largeness of heart, and a perpetual dropping of taunts, threats, sneers and reproaches to endure, as from the tongue of a contentious woman!

"I would rather keep a flock of sheep!" was Cromwell's cry, set aloft Protector of the Commonwealth of England.

But the man born a king cannot lay down his kingdom. Come a peril, he must confront it; a maze of difficulties, he must find out the way—with the man's wit he has, and the grace God may grant him by his people's prayers.

"Give the king Thy judgments, O God, and Thy righteousness unto the king's son."

Thus prayed David in his last psalm of prayer—a psalm for Solomon.

"And Solomon had peace on all sides round about him. And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, from Dan unto Beersheba, all the days of Solomon."

And the people blessed him.

So is England blessed, because they who rule her rule in the fear of God, and are beloved of the nation.

XII.

"Wonderful Luck!"

August 8.

SCORE the second victory to "Fritz"! Prize—thirty cannon, two eagles, six mitrailleuses, and four thousand prisoners. King William thanks God for His mercies!

The news came last night by telegram, and marvellous rumours are flying.

It was Macmahon who was defeated; the scene of the battle round and about Wörth. The proud Army of the Rhine is in retreat, turned back at the first charge, and in the maddest rout!

And from the Spicherenberg above Saarbrück, where little Louis was baptized a man of blood, Frossard and his French have been swept away. The Prussian flag floats on the hill of vengeance, and in the dust lie reconciled the untimely dead; the very flower of two armies, brave as any ever the world saw!

The slaughter on both fields was prodigious—
only the day before yesterday!

In Paris—how came the tidings of disaster to Paris, and what did the people say?

The gay city had no heartache in the morning while the battle was raging far off on the frontier; and in the afternoon, when there arrived a messenger at the Bourse, commissioned by the father of lies, to proclaim a great victory for France, with capture of Landau, of Prince Frederick-Charles and

his entire army, she believed it, and began to exult as only Paris can exult over a fallen enemy. Suddenly, while the frenzy of vindictive joy was at its height, came the miserable, mortifying truth. Then the whole city went wild with rage. The populace ran together in the Place Vendôme, shouting for justice on the inventor of the cruel delusion. Out on the balcony came Ollivier—where was his light heart then?—and strove to pacify them with an assurance that the culprit had been arrested, and should not escape. All he could ask of the angry multitude was *patience*.

“In the name of our country, let us have patience!”

XIII.

“All may yet be Retrieved.”

“All may yet be retrieved.”

Words of ill omen for France! What? Is all so far lost that thus her Emperor, commander-in-chief, can speak of her fortunes?

A heavy blow and great discouragement have fallen upon him.

“Marshal Macmahon has lost a battle. General Frossard has been compelled to fall back. All may yet be retrieved.”

Paris runs to and fro, amazed at her calamity. The unruly multitude seek a victim for their fury. Paris out of luck is Paris dangerous. The ministers entreat her to be calm, and, to enforce their supplications, have proclaimed a state of siege.

It was sad in the city on Sunday. Through the darkness reinforcements for the army were mustering, and in the early wet morning, amidst universal gloom, they marched away. Women were at their doors; mothers, sisters, sweethearts. To one who wept said an artisan, passing by: "Mistress, the time is come when every woman in France must play the man, and every man the hero!"

The rain rained all day. The Parisians do not love rain, but they seemed never to heed it, as they stood at the street corners, in fevered, restless, suspicious groups, hearing, telling, debating the news. With what hope they had, and this proclamation of the Empress, they went to rest that night:—

"Frenchmen! The opening of the war has not been in our favour. Our arms have suffered a check. Let us be firm under this reverse, and let us hasten to repair it. Let there be amongst us but a single party, that of France; but a single flag, the flag of our national honour. I come into your midst. Faithful to my mission and my duty, you will see me first, where danger threatens, to defend the flag of France. I call upon all good citizens to preserve order; to disturb it would be to conspire with our enemies. EUGÉNIE."

A spirited proclamation, but Eugénie is no Jeanne d'Arc! The flag of France will soon fall from her feeble hand, if there be any fore-showing of days to come in the experience of days that are gone.

The invader is in France.

What a commentary on the vain-glorious boasting of a week ago!

"The trial is serious: to sustain us here it is necessary that Paris and France consent to make great efforts of patriotism," is the Emperor's last word from Metz on that day of defeat.

"Let the nation rise as one man!" is the appeal of his ministers in the capital.

Since then we have no tidings from the city in tumult. Post and telegraph have ceased. For what is happening we are cast on conjecture, and on historic parallels that we hardly like to quote above our breath.

"All may yet be retrieved!"

There is a thrill of despair in the words. Napoleon sees that the beginning of the end is come.

XIV.

What is on the Cards?

ABDICATION. Revolution. Socialism; that Red Spectre which Napoleon has kept chained, and has used, to scare society, whenever society has betrayed a tendency to fail in passive obedience to its saviour.

It is an unmanly terror that Paris has of the dregs of its populace, or periodical whiffs of grape shot would not be needed to dissipate the dreadful shade.

To live in terror of King Mob is a miserable life. They have never taken his measure in France;

the height, breadth, and substance of him: but as he makes a vast roaring, away they flee, or cower out of sight, leaving him at liberty for every mischief, until some Napoleon, swift to shed blood, sweeps the streets with fire and thunder, and government by massacre prevails. But King Mob is only wounded. In his agony hate increases. Out of his lair he rushes again with might and vengeance when the arm of the tyrant is paralysed.

It has not been so with us in England. The nation will not have it. Are any subject to wrong? by process of law they may get redress, by violence never. Common-sense and common courage are a more practical restraint than grape shot.

There was much laughter a year or two ago at the tears of a man in authority who could not find in his heart to order soldiers to disperse a popular gathering, come together to try whether or no they had a certain right, which was disputed. He was afraid lest blood might come of it, and he did well to be afraid. The multitude was not of the unruly sort that sets on wild wreck in a city, but laborious, honest, self-governed men; men in whose toilworn hands, according to the ancient wisdom, lies the maintaining of the state of the world. Their own leaders took them quietly away, and no dragons' teeth were sown with those memorable tears. But if they had been drops of life blood! By this time conscience would have begun to make cowards of us all, and we should have had our Red Spectre too.

A few in these days profess to be disquieted because of what they call the uprising of the de-

mocracy. If the democracy grow too fast ahead it will be because other orders of the community retire from their places. But it is difficult to conceive of a time when any rank of Englishmen will cease to take their own part.

"Every life is subject to its duties; to be faithful to them, that is honour: to neglect them that is shame."

This national confession of responsibility has made England what she is.

The denial of it is the prolific root of disorder in France.

We have abuses enough to amend, but we have attained, at least, to this measure of political wisdom; we know it is at their peril when men live at idle ease, suffering bad customs to grow strong until they are kept as laws, and letting who will bear the burden of the commonwealth.

By all the signs of the times violent changes are upon the cards for France. The silence of post and telegraph signified disturbances in Paris. The Ollivier ministry has fallen, and the Duke de Palikao is called upon by the Empress Regent to construct its successor. It is good to note what men come to the front first in such tumultuous days. The name of the Emperor is ignored in every act by which the Government seeks to reanimate the dispirited people.

The moderate republicans enunciate their adverse views with precision and distinctness. Their principal spokesman is M. Jules Favre, the most

learned and eloquent of French lawyers, a member of the Legislative Chamber who voted against the war on the question of supplies. He ascribes the reverses of the army to the incapacity of the general-in-chief, and requires that he should relinquish the command. The Count de Keratry goes further, and suggests that the Emperor should *abdicate*.

Another danger of the situation is the Orleanist revival. The exiled sons and grandsons of King Louis Philippe claim the right to help in the deliverance of France invaded. The Mobile Guard beg to be put under the command of old Changarnier, and the National Guard ask for arms.

But it is the interest and business of the Government to save the imperial dynasty, and they will put arms into the hand of no possible rival, even to the cry of "The country in danger!"

While political parties menace each other, the undisciplined people wait and watch trembling: their eyes fixed on the phosphorescent glow that rises out of the deep corruption of the city, and steals in lurid warning along the walls; the foreshadow of the Red Spectre that political parties and undisciplined people all alike dread.

The Red Spectre, that inexorable ghost of bad old times, is rising again! What is it? How came it to haunt society in France? How came Paris to have such an abject terror of it?

There is an exquisite subtilty that is not justice, which perverts its parable, and says it is the spon-

taneous generation of envy, the evil soul of labour and poverty. The interpretation is not true. Labour and poverty, ruled by men of counsel, stand clothed in white patience everywhere. The Red Spectre was the monster-birth of tyranny and misery; and fanaticism, without God, was its nursing-mother.

Consider a little what was the state of France when it appeared.

Personal government had run into corruption; corruption bred revolution; revolution opened the door to all the furies, and played wild havoc with old institutions. From the king downwards, all who were akin to power and greatness sought to flee from the judgment coming on them in high places. Neither they nor their fathers had ruled in the fear of God. Their strength had been the law of justice, and they who were feeble were counted as nothing worth. When the slander of a city and the rage of the people overtook them, they had but one hope, the vain hope of hiding themselves from the day of wrath. Compassion will never cease to weep for the innocent who perished with the guilty by that inscrutable decree which visits the sins of the fathers upon the children; but truth must acknowledge that the expiation was not out of measure with the long tragedy of the oppressed people.

Think of that tragedy. Apart from cruel laws, conscriptions, persecutions because of religion, what was the common life of the multitudes whose heritage is labour? Take the words of Jean de la Bruyère, court philosopher, what time the judgment

was in incubation: "It is ever a new thing to me to contemplate the ferocity with which men treat other men. I see certain wild animals, males and females, scattered over the fields, black, livid, burnt with the sun, bound to the soil which they delve with invincible perseverance; they have an articulate voice, and when they rise to their feet they show a human face. They are indeed men. At night they retire into their lairs, where they feed on black bread, water, and roots; they spare other men the toil of ploughing, sowing, and reaping, and deserve better than to want of the bread they produce."

Yet they do want, and even perish of hunger! A vast crowd of them went once to supplicate alms of their lords, and were confronted by a gallows forty feet high. After that there was a general famine amongst toilers and spinners. "Let them eat grass!" sneered a man in authority. Such were the mad rejoinders to the million-voiced complaint of starving men; such the portentous summing up of the apathy and rigour of ten thousand remorseless taskmasters. They had forgotten that there is a God who judgeth the earth. But the Eternal heard their mocking, and His terrible voice answered them.

"Hear, ye kings; learn, ye that rule the people; your power is given you of the Lord, who shall try your works. Ye have not kept My law, nor walked after My counsel. The cry of the poor reacheth unto heaven. Their spoil is in all your houses. What mean ye, that ye beat My people

to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor? The bread of the needy is their life; he that defraudeth him thereof is a man of blood. He that defraudeth the labourer of his hire is a bloodshedder. The Lord standeth in awe of no man's greatness, but careth for great and small alike. Mercy will soon pardon the meanest, but mighty men shall be mightily tormented."

And the judgment and sore trial came. It is three generations ago, and still they cease not. In the throes of revolution the Red Spectre was brought forth, engendered of broken tyranny in refuge with black misery, a fearsome shape which one-eyed fanatics would dignify as the vengeance of God. Nay, but it is the very son of the old iniquity, with all its sins, misshapen limbs, and hideous features!

The old iniquity scorned disguises. The young iniquity went masked as liberty, equality, and fraternity, and preached a lying gospel, with chrism of blood, to hunger and nakedness, represented by men of St. Antoine and Mænads of Versailles, until the gaunt, stark phantoms of the streets glowed into panic-frenzy, panic-fury, and the Red Terror was let loose upon all France. It was an awful time! Well may France, well may Paris, quake at the ghost of it. For worse than death is the fear of the unruly multitude.

How to exorcise the fear, that is the question.

If polite society would pluck up a spirit, and look King Mob hard in the face, it might learn somewhat: learn that labour does not meddle with

mischief unless it be robbed of its wages; that the poor are not dangerous unless oppressed; that even demagogues are harmless until encroachments and criminal neglects make them opportunities. And invariably society would recognise outcasts of its own amongst the most furious at hounding on the rabble to become paramount.

When the Red Terror reigned in France who were its prime ministers? Marat, Egalité, Maillard, Danton, Chabot, Lébon, Hébert, Robespierre, Fabre d'Eglantine, Couthon, St. Just, Carrier, Jourdan, Collot d'Herbois, Fouquier-Tinville. Was there one poor son of laborious work amongst them all? Not one. Dissolute prince and priest were there, and men of law and literature, of physic and philosophy, of wealth and pleasure, who had failed in their vocations, and taken up with patriotism of the sort that is the last refuge of scoundrels. As demagogues they had their day. Society was so corrupt and enfeebled that they ruled it with a nod. The multitude was so broken to subjection and misery that it obeyed them as it obeyed its old taskmasters, for fear of stripes and the gallows, and did their bidding, even when their bidding was massacre. Traitors all were these miscreants, and vanished into sudden darkness, swept away in the dance of death they set agoing.

They perished, but their seed remains, a flourishing progeny, that springs up very rank and proud in days like these. Already the mushroom heads begin to stretch above the common height, watching the red glow upon the walls of Paris.

We shall see whether polite society will dare to defy its terrorists this time, or whether it will give place to their riot as in the former days. In the strength and liberty of a pure conscience alone can it ever be a match for them; and we have no right to expect that such courage has been acquired under the Second Empire.

It needs no prophet to foretell that those who live to behold the end will witness awful things this war.

XV.

After the Battles—Night and Morning.

FOR this time, then, Germany is delivered. The battle of Wörth has saved her from the gospel of civilisation and freedom, according to Napoleon III.

It was a great battle, and an awful rout. While there was hope of victory the French fought like heroes. Hope lost, they ran like hares. For dear life they ran, and flung away their arms, their clothing, whatever could encumber or retard their headlong flight. It was a marvel to the Germans how many troops of unwounded men were ready to cry quarter, and surrender. Yet was honour saved. The splendid Cuirassiers died almost to a man; and so, set in the forefront of the battle, died certain companies of famous, rare Zouaves, who had ventured to give their Emperor an adverse vote at the *plébiscite* in the spring of the year. The victors had heavy loss too: they who

win are but one degree happier than their defeated enemy!

But it is the sufferings of the quiet people that touch me most. The fighting men have their pay and meed of glory; the quiet people have nothing. When the Spicherenberg was retaken by von Goeben and his Prussians, and Frossard was driven *pêle-mêle* out of Saarbrück, the fugitive French soldiers spread terror of their pursuers wherever they passed. The peasants forsook their villages to seek refuge in the forests. From Forbach it was a most mournful exodus. Night was coming on when the enemy entered the town, and the panic-stricken inhabitants set forth to escape over the wooded hills towards Metz. As the darkness deepened fear increased. Forlorn mothers made the air ring with appeals to the Divine Mother; children trudged wonderingly, bearing in their little arms some household pet; husbands supported their wives, and tried to comfort them with brave, tender words; old men and women, burdened beyond their strength, stumbled along the rough ways, silent, filled with despair at this renewal of the dire griefs and calamities that they endured when they were young.

Yes, the terrible days of the First Empire are come over again for Alsace, without their delusive halo of glory. Many must still survive of the Saverne and Phalsbourg folk who remember the last invasion. Through that pleasant, undulating land, rich in corn, wine, and oil, the bloody tide of war is rolling once more. What a ride in the rain was that of "Fritz" and his generals the morning after their victory at

Wörth! They found the village of Gunstett full of wounded men. From every cottage window pale faces stared out to see them go by; lucky they, to be still amongst the living, and sound of wind and limb!

A little farther, and there were more dreadful evidences of the great battle. Dead horses lay about the fields. Here was a tall Prussian, fallen in the act of charging. There Zouaves and Turcos, rigid in the fantastic attitudes of instant death in fight. Some one had covered their faces with pieces of linen, which the rain had beaten in on their features in relief. The buriers of the dead were very busy there, and far and near; but the harvest was more than the reapers could gather in a day.

All along a streamlet running by a vineyard lay the slain in a furious combat of infantry, and just beyond the victims of a desperate cavalry charge, the last charge of the Cuirassiers. They had got entangled amongst the vine stakes. The vines were trodden down, the earth was trampled, and sodden and sour with blood. Piled in heaps were their gorgeous trappings, plumed helmets, saddles; their swords thrust into the mould—to cleanse them of what stains! Mixed with these trophies were the relics of a regiment of Lancers—their staves with streamers, red and white, their shakos, shoes, tunics, knapsacks.

And more, much more, to be compassionated than the heroes who were being laid in their seven feet of earth, were the sorely maimed and wounded who were being still brought up in carts when

"Fritz" was taking his morning ride. A few white faces were turned to heaven, and the rain rained down upon them unheeded, unfelt. They were at peace!

Fugitives, wounded, dead, thus and thus fared they. And the prisoners?

Surely there must be joy in the first sense of safety after peril. A pleasant thing it is to see the sun! Yea, life is sweet.

They were almost blithe then, the prisoners. A batch of nearly five hundred went by rail to Frankfort, and were halted there to receive a dole of sausage, beer, and cigars. A vast crowd came out to see, but no word of taunt or triumph insulted their misfortune. Indeed, the foes of yesterday were friends to-day. The Turcos, unembarrassed by fine sentiments of honour and nationality, sold their regimental buttons as relics to any Frankforter who would give a handsome price. Then some of the French soldiers, admiring the results of their thrifty example, imitated it, and put a few pieces of money in their purses. They did not appear at all sorry for themselves, and the number of officers amongst them without hurt was very surprising to the Germans. One grim old captain refused their hospitality—only one. Honour the poor old brave who had no stomach in defeat and captivity!

XVI.

March of Events.

EVENTS march fast. The Prussians surround Strasbourg, and hold the railway lines leading from that city to Haguenau, Lyons, and Paris. They occupy Saverne also, and are overrunning Lorraine to within a few miles of Metz. Their forces at this moment in France are estimated at not less than 230,000 men, of whom 30,000 are fine cavalry. The tide of German invasion swells and flows fast, and the imperial ride to Berlin is turning out a gallop at the double back to Paris. Napoleon is blamed as the cause of all, and the political moralist of *The Times* preaches a sermon on the text of "Who breaks pays."

It is admitted by the victors that they outnumbered the French at Wörth, and the cry goes in Paris that the French fought at other disadvantage besides inferior strength. The Emperor loves to command, though he is incompetent to direct, and he leaves too little to the discretion of his generals in presence of the enemy. Macmahon before Wörth would have saved himself for the arrival of De Failly with reinforcements, but the Emperor through the telegraph reiterated, "Attack, attack!" He was at a distance, not in a position to judge of the overwhelming force of "Fritz," and utter rout was the consequence of his ignorant precipitancy. Macmahon did what valour could. For long, long hours he strove against defeat, and brought up his

men to the charge eleven times, throwing away dear life to save dearer honour. Where he and his remnant are now, and where De Failly is, who never showed his face that fatal day, none can tell.

There is a passionate call for more and more men to the frontier, and the French army threatens soon to be converted into an armed mob: not the rampart to stand fast against the German nation in arms which the Emperor's rash challenge has brought across the Rhine. And confidence in the leaders is shaken. Lebœuf and his fellows dressed up the imperial reviews very handsomely, but they are proving themselves insignificant captains of war. King William has three counsellors who are a match for Napoleon and all his men—more than a match! Great Bismarck, the chancellor, von Roon, minister of war, and lean von Moltke, prince of strategists.

To the French people, a proclamation of the invader.

“We, William, King of Prussia, make known this to the inhabitants of French territory occupied by the German armies:—The Emperor Napoleon having made, by land and sea, an attack on the German nation which desired, and still desires, to live at peace with the French people, I have assumed the command of the German armies to repel this aggression, and I have been led by military circumstances to cross the frontier of France. I am waging war against soldiers, not against French

citizens. The latter will continue to enjoy security for their persons and property so long as they shall not, by hostile attempts against the German troops, deprive me of the right to accord them my protection."

It is surprising, but this proclamation finds a ready response.

The Mayor of Nancy, appealed to by the citizens for arms, replied: "The city of Nancy has none; and moreover, where the valour of soldiers is powerless, what avails the courage of citizens?"

The invaders may come on! They are well reported of as paying for what they take, and as dealing considerably with the harmless people. But where, by chance, as after Wörth, peasants are caught robbing and mutilating the dead and wounded, they find a short shrift and no mercy.

These are the horrors of war!

XVII.

"Dead or Victorious!"

"DEAD or victorious!" says the Emperor in answer to friends who advise his return to Paris.

He knows what his welcome would be. The love and obedience of Paris wait on good luck. A few more disastrous days, and that fickle populace will clamour for his overthrow; and not a soul will cry as he falls, "God pity him!"

It is a new thing for me to range on the winning side; perhaps my natural inclination to sympathise

with the beaten will maintain the balance of justice. But I cannot, cannot yet confess to pity for Napoleon.

He never was one of my heroes. The *coup d'état* by which he captured the imperial crown was a monstrous iniquity. Society condoned it; sovereigns gave him the kiss of peace; success strewed his bloody path to the throne with the light sands of popular favour, but at every little eddying gust of adversity the trail is uncovered, and the Red Spectre shakes its chains, and menaces him with a dreadful day of reckoning.

It seems now as if it might be near at hand. Paris is ready to break into revolt, in anticipation of a possible siege. The gossip goes that the beautiful woods of Boulogne and Vincennes are to be cut down, and the splendid houses without the fortifications levelled, to make a wilderness round the city—the enticing city, all the world's Vanity Fair.

The nerve of the Empress begins to fail her for fear of the people. She wills that her son stay with his father; terrible are the Prussians, but far more terrible the *Reds*. She was beloved by the nation once; how came she to lose its love? Some allege her bigotry, and indulgence to the priests; some her frivolity, and the lavish profusion of her court, where the liveliest of ladies and the fast and loose of the other sex have been ever the most welcome guests. The honest, good, and simple have found no place there. Under the empire they have fallen into the cold shade, and all promotion

has been accumulated on men of loud profession and servile temper, conveniently tolerant of despotism. We see the upshot of a policy worked by such instruments in the present disaster of France. Their infamous peculations and neglects are coming to light, and are being framed already into articles of indictment against their master. Nothing is what it seemed. Even the army and its boasted organisation and preparedness are proving hollow deceptions. At Metz, in the very camp of refuge itself, the commissariat is so defective that the men are on short rations already. What fight can they make, being only half fed?

“A wise prince is the upholding of a people.” Alas! it is long since any prince of France has had courage to be wise. When Napoleon laid violent hands upon the state it was disorganised: he will leave it disorganised and demoralised, spoiled of honour, and poor indeed! Nothing vanishes so swiftly as material prosperity; nothing becomes of less account to large-hearted men in the hour of national peril and disgrace. I am much mistaken if France would not eat her bread with water and bitter herbs for many and many a day, to be spared the humiliations that impend over her head. It is her way when she is troubled to cry out that she is betrayed. Ah! if she could acquit her conscience of consent to her betrayal! But as the prince is, so have been his ministers, and so have become the people under them. They have loved pleasure and hated discipline. They have counted life a pastime, and time a market for gain; they have

been getting every day by evil means, and all they have gotten will not profit them in the day of their calamity!

"Dead or victorious!" says the Emperor; thus or thus he will re-enter the capital.

A fine sounding phrase, but empty. Better men will die for France, but not Napoleon III.

His lovers declare that in the next battle he will himself lead his army against the Germans, and, if fate decree him another defeat, he will die upon the field. I don't believe it. This does a brave, despairing King Theodore, not a man of shifts, and crafty devices, and bloody surprises, like Napoleon. His entrance into power was so base that he deserves not the exit of a hero. Come the worst, he will save himself, and end in ignoble, comfortable, obscure exile.

XVIII.

The German Advance.

August 15.

It is the Fête Napoleon to-day. The Rhine Army boasted that it would keep the feast in Berlin; but, behold, it is all scattered in retreat, and the Germans are swarming in clouds on its traces.

King William has crossed the Moselle, and fixed his head-quarters at Herny, within twelve miles of Metz. There is a report that Marshal Bazaine, now major-general under the Emperor (*vice* Lebœuf superseded), with the Imperial Guard at his com-

mand, and 180,000 men besides who have not yet seen the enemy, proposes to abandon the city, and retire upon Chalons and the lines of the Marne, eighty miles nearer to Paris. Food must be deficient indeed, and enthusiasm dead amongst the men, or with such a host there would surely be one more effort to turn the tide of invasion here.

But how fast the tide rises! The Prussians have taken Petite Pierre and Lichtenstein, small fortified passes of the Vosges mountains; they occupy Saverne, Nancy, and Pont-à-Mousson, and are investing Phalsbourg and Bitche as well as Strasbourg. The Crown Prince is in steady hot pursuit of Macmahon and the broken forces that escaped from Wörth. Just before Strasbourg was shut up, 3000 of the weary fugitives found shelter there. Macmahon and the rest are retreating by forced marches on the road to Chalons, and the fear in Paris is that before he can get there and recruit his discouraged men, "Fritz" may overtake them, and drive on a wholesale capitulation.

"Fritz" has announced that he does not love war. Nevertheless, he goes with alacrity where duty calls. He is a tall soldier-like man, thin, erect, with an aquiline nose, a full fair beard, keen eye-glance, and stern yet placid countenance. His men are devoted to him. He takes thoughtful care for them, and has a considerate kindness for the wounded, whether friend or enemy. Prisoners also fare well at his hands, and civilians occasionally get an order of release. Amongst the captures of Wörth were two journalists, special correspondents

of the *Figaro* and *Gaulois*, who were set at liberty after a few days' detention, with leave to tell all they had seen and heard. Whether M. Edmond About was also made prize of is not yet ascertained. He was last seen trudging heavily on the road to Saverne with a rabble of fugitives from the battle, since which date he is missing. Writers of books are many, but writers of good books are few; and M. Hachette, his publisher, advertises both at home and abroad that any information concerning his whereabouts will be thankfully received in Paris.

The Germans are plainly losing respect for their enemy. The occupation of Nancy, that charming city, the ancient capital of Lorraine, was an audaciously cool transaction. The mayor had counselled the people beforehand to receive the Prussians well, and last Friday, at three o'clock of the afternoon, when four Uhlans, their adventurous scouts, rode into the city to take formal possession, no dog barked. Half an hour later twenty-six more cavalry men passed through to the railway station, and took possession of that, bidding the station-master consider himself a prisoner on parole. The mayor was invited to present himself to the leader of the expedition, encamped not far off at St. Max. He returned with a message to the municipal council that they must vote the conquerors a sum of 50,000 francs, with large rations of oats, a *bagatelle*, the Germans said, for so fine a city. Two hotels also, the Chartreuse and the Hôtel St. George, were laid under contribution to provide each a dinner for

seventy-five Uhlans who had been superintending the destruction of a mile or so of railway, and the pulling down of the telegraph posts. The dinner was not too extravagant: soup, boiled meat, vegetables, and a pint of wine and six cigars each man. These brave Germans are very fond of smoke; they are equally ready to exact and to give cigars.

Thus far, perhaps the most significant act of the German advance is King William's decree that the conscription be abolished in the parts of Alsace and Lorraine occupied by his armies. These fine provinces are warned of reconquest by the invader's exercise of sovereign right.

Bishop Shirley, in a letter home, written from France many years ago, shows their peril in the event of war with Germany, and predicts that they will be lost.

XIX.

"They have deceived Me!"

THERE was truth in the amazing rumour that Bazaine wants to get away with his army from the camp of refuge at Metz; and without fighting if he can. But he will have to ask leave of the Prussians for that. They are hovering all round him, an immense host. King William and his nephew Prince Frederick-Charles are there, and the plot evidently is to hold Bazaine fast until "Fritz" has dealt with Macmahon.

The Emperor escaped from the city with his

little son last Sunday afternoon. Metz has its garrison and provision for a siege independent of the Rhine Army, and in his leave-taking proclamation Napoleon charges the patriotism of the citizens with the defence of that bulwark of France. The chief interest of the situation centres now round those old, old walls. They have never been breached; Metz has never been taken.

The flight of the Emperor was expedient: the soldiers will never catch fire from him again! He has fallen away from honour, and, 'tis said, reflects the misfortunes of France in his face. He speaks little to any one, and is often heard muttering: "They have deceived me! They have unworthily deceived me!"

"Many kings have sat upon the ground. Many mighty men have been greatly disgraced." Where will history range Napoleon III.? with these pathetic figures of greatness in adversity, or with adventurers foiled?

Why the fortune of war should have turned so unexpectedly and so dead against France provokes much discussion. Cynics allege, as of course, that Providence is on the side of the biggest battalions, and the German battalions are undeniably the biggest. But there have been other reasons at work besides inferiority of numbers.

The first and chief of them I take to be the cause in hand. The Germans are citizens, fighting to maintain their independence and their territory; the French are professional soldiers, fighting for not

more than one in ten knows what, except that the Emperor bids them.

This war promises to be the unmasking of many fictions that have long ruled as facts. The French went out to battle trusting in their chassepot, which kills farther than eye can see, and in their mitrailleuse which mows down men like grass; but the measure and coolness of the Germans have made their needle-gun better worth than either. For my part, I would always have more faith in the man than in his tool; in the hands of a bad workman all tools are bad. The French soldier is in haste to fire, and wastes his ammunition in random shots: long before the battle is over his cartridges are spent, and a hedge-stake would serve him as well as his vaunted chassepot. But the German husbands his ammunition, marks his foe, and every shot tells; when the fight is done, he has a reserve in his cartridge pouch for casual encounters. This is the summing up of a comparison of notes between the French prisoners and their Prussian guards.

Other significant details, sufficient reason why the French are falling so sadly short of their repute and their pretensions, have been revealed to the world since the rout at Wörth. In the officers' tents, in the encampment abandoned by Macmahon, were found many cumbersome articles of luxury, even articles of luxury belonging to the toilette of ladies. But in their baggage were discovered no maps of France, not even of the Vosges mountains. A check on this side the Rhine was not anticipated in the imperial scheme of the campaign, and the officers were

fatally ignorant of the country. While the enemy knew every high-road and by-road, every goat track over the hills and foresters' track through the woods, the French commanders did not always know the way from one large town to another. The Prussians move at night, and without beat of drum; and their venturesome, ubiquitous Uhlans are continually circling in van and rear and flank, to give them notice of opportunities and warning of perils. And they not only know how to move quietly, but how to hide themselves; so that their sudden arrivals have acted like a series of surprises on the unwary French, who do not use scouts. Evidently instruction is deficient in the higher grades of the imperial army, and discipline dangerously relaxed.

It is very different with the invaders. The German forces have the compact and complete organisation of an inspired machine. The officers fare hardly as fare the men, and none but those of proved capacity and valour are put in posts of difficulty. For all ranks discipline is rigid; and the fighting men are not taxed with needless cares. The army on the march is followed by knights of St. John, whose mission is to carry the wounded off the field of battle, by admirable surgeons and nursing-sisters, by ministers of religion and buriers of the dead. These march all on foot, bearing the red and white flag of neutrality, and look like a train of pilgrims in the wake of the stalwart, splendid soldiery.

The Emperor moans that he has been deceived. He has not been well served by his creatures, but

he has been his own arch-deceiver. Smitten with judicial blindness, he, who for twenty years has passed with the world for able, astute, subtle, strong, and unscrupulous, appears a very fool; baffled, vacillating, purposeless.

We may ask now: Was he ever in such earnest to fight as he made a show of? The secret treaty was a remarkable note on his public proclamation. Possibly he dreamed of frightening Bismarck, and had it in his heart magnanimously to offer him peace for Germany again at a certain price when his invincible army was arrayed upon the frontier.

But Bismarck had no mind to live in terror of the rod, and von Moltke knew the French army not invincible, knew its vulnerable parts better than its master, is proving strong enough with his uncivilised, enslaved barbarians to break it in pieces.

Then the universal condemnation of the war in England must have given the Emperor pause. For England, let cavillers say what they will, has a reserve-force in her public opinion which no prince and no nation despises. His long delay in Paris, and his longer delay at Metz, before a blow was struck, point to one or another of these conclusions; unless indeed the unreadiness of everybody and everything belonging to the army made a prompt beginning impossible. Von Moltke asked three weeks to mobilise his forces, and Napoleon made him a present of them, to the circumventing and upsetting of all his fine schemes of plunder. He sent King William an invitation to meet him on

the Rhine, without counting the cost of the hospitality that might be required by a royal following all in arms. When kings come so far from home they love to make the journey pay the shot. The Emperor anticipates the settling-day with fearful heart. His servants have deceived him; he is poorer than he knew.

And what will France say? Has not she also been unworthily deceived? Napoleon will lose a crown, perhaps; but she will have to pay in life and honour.

XX.

Paris is warned.

PARIS has rallied from her panic, and presents a gayer front to her reverses; but the provinces sending up their recruits show a very dejected countenance. The members of the Left in the Legislative Chamber do not spare to speak out on the perils of the situation. There was a grand commotion last Saturday when M. Gambetta said: "There must be no misunderstanding nor surprise. It is necessary to know whether we must care now for the safety of the country or the safety of the dynasty." The opposition and the galleries applauded so long and loudly that the president threatened to have the house cleared.

Confidence in the recuperative powers of the imperial *régime* declines apace. It shows neither courage nor conscience. At the outbreak of the war it used its strength to prevent German subjects

leaving France, lest they should be incorporated in the German armies. Last week, by an equally arbitrary exercise of its will, it decreed their immediate expulsion; and on Saturday and Sunday from eight hundred to a thousand families, belonging to the better class of workmen, and hitherto domiciled in Paris, arrived at Cologne. These poor refugees are as much to be pitied as any victims of this iniquitous war. King William has issued a proclamation to French subjects living peaceably in his dominions, bidding them not fear reprisals.

The stroke of the axe rings in the Bois de Boulogne, and a decree has gone forth from the council of the Empress Regent that whoever questions the efficiency of the defences of Paris shall be tried by court-martial for high treason. This prodigious threat does not, however, prevent the Parisians laughing at the fortification-works. They are warned, but nobody's imagination can realise yet that the enchanting city may have to stand a siege. All the gay world dearly loves its Paris, and if the barbarians come near enough to mar her loveliness, surely neutral nations will interpose and save her! I would not have Paris presume so much upon her charms: there is a guilt for which the fairest syren cannot claim impunity, the guilt of blood. England, the leader of the neutral nations, has made up her mind that Napoleon was wilful and wicked in stirring up this war; and if the Germans, cautioned by past experience, take a large security against future attacks, it is not probable that England will

stretch out her hand armed to preserve the integrity of France. The grimace of sympathy is cheap, and if her reverses continue she is sure to get enough of that; but of material help she will get none. We know that she is enduring but a tithe of what she meant to inflict. Who doubts that her Zouaves and Turcos, let loose on the Rhenish provinces, would have emulated the ferocious soldiery of Duras and Turenne? Neutrals may compassionate, mediate, advise, but military success is not a plant that yields the fruits of moderation, and in her day of triumph Germany will not incline her ear to counsellors. She may consider that she has more light than the wisest of them.

If France, if Paris, at this hour of peril, are putting their trust in any help but self-help, they are deceiving themselves—deceiving themselves as idly, as fatally, as their Emperor has done.

XXI.

Here and There.

August 17.

THE Queen holds a council at Windsor to-day, and then goes down to Scotland. Happy Queen, happy people we, who only know the agonies of war by their story in the daily papers! The long peace of English society is written in beautiful characters all over the land. Old cities, old houses,

old gardens, if they decay, decay in mossy, drowsy quiet. The plough turns up no bones of the dead in battle; the green hills bear no sad memorial crosses for bitter foes laid in a common grave. In the dewy still morning I hear the herd-boy call the cattle to the milking shed, and the rustle of the tide as it washes on the pebbly beach. In the evening I look over the scattered lights of the village to the broad plain of the sea, to the soft slope of the downs, the woods lost in hazy gloom, and the brown corn-fields touched with gleams of silver lustre by the rising moon.

Here all is sweet peace.

And only a day's journey away, the sun glares on horrible carnage. The morning dawns, the evening sets, on furious storm of battle, which rends and tears and slays, and ceases to take breath, then rages again with demoniac fury. It is all round Metz. The camp of refuge has proved a deep pit of destruction. The combat began on Sunday, after the escape of the Emperor, and still it continues, a combat of giants: Bazaine and his tens of thousands desperate to break out of the trap in which they are enclosed, and King William as dour to hold them fast.

It is impossible for us in England to conceive really what war is to the poor souls dwelling amidst its tumult. The Alsatians, on the debateable ground that France and Germany have fought over so often, lead a miserable life. They love their little fields for the dangers they have known, but

they cry out against their masters in an agony of pity for themselves: "No matter what they call us, so that they let us live!"

For life is precious, even in this terrible year. Before the invasion there was a drought, and the cattle suffered dreadfully. With the Prussians came floods of rain, and the corn crops are rotting on the ground. A very poor, laborious people at the best of times, now destitution threatens whole villages. Panic is their daily bread; their cry, let them save themselves from present danger, let them save their small goods from plunder, and they may be valiant whose trade it is to fight!

Continual fear does not breed a brave and generous race. These Alsatian peasants will murder a wounded enemy, and flee to the woods at the passing of a mere convoy of food and forage. Their ways and customs are simple as their fathers' were, unchanged since the great wars at the beginning of the century, just the same as we read of them in the novels of Erckmann-Chatrian. Their stone cottages have stood for generations. The woodland scenery is ever pleasant; the roadsides are bordered with fruit-trees, apples, plums, pears, all very rich in produce this summer. When the enemy enters a village, the bellman goes about to-day just as his predecessor went about in the old emperor's days, calling on the inhabitants to bring in bread, meat and oats; and when the enemy rides off replenished, the women and children gather in groups at their doors, to gaze after the gallant show, scared and angry, and yet admiring.

A step on the gravel, the post! What news last night by telegraph?

Great news. "The French have lost another battle, and the Emperor was almost caught as he ran away. But they'll have him yet, the Prussians will! what a pity they can't get a good shot at him, and make an end of this fighting. They'd drop it if he was killed!"

So far the vulgar sentiment. I wish with all my heart that vulgar practice justified it! I wish with all my heart that war made short cuts of the sort to the solution of the quarrels of princes, and that nations were agreed to accept them as honourable ways of peace. But I am afraid that Germany would still hold France responsible, if the Emperor were ever so effectually abolished. When will it be counted the chief glory of a people that they love to live at peace?

The blue shadows of the morning are still upon the fields under the wood whither the cattle are wending their slow way from the manor yard. The cool air wafts to and fro the fragrance of meadow flowers, and from the distance of the shore comes a thrill of melancholy music. How grateful is the serene, still beauty that the open window frames!

For it is like a bad dream—this war. The roving commission of journalists and pencillers bring it so home to us by their vivid sketches that we are fain to weep like witnesses of a tragedy played before our eyes.

M. Edmond About has reappeared in Paris full

of strange stories. He was safe at his own house in Saverne all the while he was lost. He was there that day five bold Uhlans rode into the town, and summoned it to surrender. It surrendered, a town of six thousand inhabitants. A few more bold Uhlans appeared, and made a requisition for supplies, ludicrous in its extravagance. One item, a sample of the rest, was seventy-five thousand cigars for the officers, and five hundred kilogrammes of tobacco for the men; sure the French might be advised of the enemy's approach by the pungent cloud of their pipes! When the mayor represented how impossible it was that so small a place should furnish so large an indemnity, the conquerors politely said they would accept what the town could give, and waive the remainder. Were ever conquerors so considerate before?

To put ourselves for a moment in our neighbours' place. How should we welcome a trio of Lancers coming riding and smoking through our pretty village street on a sunny afternoon, admiring it in gruff foreign *patois* as if it were their own? What would my lady answer when our village magistrate was called for with a view to requisitions? Nay, but it is a waste of force to imagine such improbable events! we had better put all our strength into making them impossible.

XXII.

A Week of Battles.

For some days the news has been involved, speculative, obscure. We have not known what to credit. The incoherent tale takes dreadful shape now, when we see the drift of it.

After three great battles,—to be known in history as the battles of Courcelles, Mars-la-Tour, and Gravelotte,—King William has succeeded in shutting up Bazaine with all his army in the camp before Metz. The dead and wounded are counted by tens of thousands. But “Fritz” has time given him to dispose of Macmahon. For there is little hope or fear on either side that Bazaine can escape to succour him in the final struggle that is expected to happen on the famous fields of Champagne.

The long, awful conflict began on the Sunday of the Emperor’s flight, between Pange and Courcelles, when half-a-dozen adventurous Uhlans made a dash to capture him, and were captured themselves instead. On Tuesday it was at its height. From dawn till dark, with fury and grim desperation it was fought; for the Germans were outnumbered by two to one, and refused to be beaten! Prince Frederick-Charles and Steinmetz were in command; and the old King, Bismarck, and von Moltke watched the battle from a hill-top—watched it fasting, dry-lipped, hushed for pain at heart, as rulers watch a battle in which the defenders of their state and nation, their best and bravest, are giving

their blood like water to save the imperilled cause. This was the day of Mars-la-Tour. When night came down upon the field, there still stood the Germans, their faces to the foe, and the foe at bay again under the walls of Metz. King William rode amongst his soldiers, and spoke his thanks. The very wounded cheered as he passed. What is the light, the magic, in the countenance of the King, that men so willingly die for him? On Thursday the French tried once more to break out of prison, —Gravelotte way. For nine hours they fought with consummate valour, but all to no purpose. The end of it was that they had to retire again within their camp.

And there they bide now. Prince Frederick-Charles is left with force enough to keep them in, and King William has started on the road to Paris, with the main body of the German army.

XXIII.

Hope deferred.

PARIS changes her mood from hour to hour. The ordeal of defeat is very hard to bear. There may be a fate in it, but it is not her own fault, and a scapegoat she must have! One foresees who the scapegoat will be.

There has been a serious disturbance in Villette, a workman's suburb, with a demonstration in favour of a republic. The Government has laid hands on the leaders, and promises them the swift despatch

of a trial by court-martial. Pleads the eloquent Michelet: "Let them alone. Judge them not, when God is about to judge our country!"

Civil disorder is indeed spreading fast. Toulouse, Marseilles, Cherbourg, Brest, Rochelle, and many other important towns are proclaimed in a state of siege. All the eastern departments were proclaimed a week ago, and now Algeria is added to the list of disaffected places.

The Emperor is at Chalons with Macmahon and the new levies, and the Empress Regent at St. Cloud is said to have received important dispatches, which are kept secret by desire of Bazaine. There is, in fact, nothing safe to tell. To people who think, the suspense is cruel. They hunger and thirst for a little information, and they usually get it first from the English newspapers; their own are not trustworthy under present circumstances.

The ministers, in deference to an imperious demand, have appointed a new Governor of Paris, General Trochu, a man in whom the orderly citizens have a confidence. He fell into the cold shade a few years since because of a book he had written on the imperial army system, in which he laid to its charge the very faults and defects that are betraying France to her ruin.

Here is the pith of his proclamation on coming into office. "Amidst the perils in which I am appointed commander-in-chief of the forces entrusted with the defence of the capital, Paris takes the part that belongs to her. She wishes to be the centre of great efforts, great sacrifices, great examples! I

believe in our success on the condition of good order, calm, and self-possession. I shall obtain order, not by the powers conferred by the state of siege, but by your patriotism. I appeal to all parties to restrain by moral authority the ardent spirits, and those who wish to profit by our public misfortunes."

XXIV.

"Pity the poor Emperor!"

THE Emperor has lived too long for his honour, but he does not yet seek a soldier's death, as his advocates wish he would. He just retires and retires as the foe comes on—from Metz to Longueville, to Etain, to Verdun, to Chalons, to Rheims. Chalons is abandoned, and its encampment burnt! Macmahon, with the Emperor at his heels, is marching north as hard as he can go, apparently to get round and give Bazaine the meeting by another way. He must march hard and fast indeed, to circumvent von Moltke's strategy, and outmarch "Fritz" who, after a brief pause to consider what the evacuation of Chalons meant, seems to have unmasked Macmahon's game, and to have turned north also. The King too must by this time be following on his traces. The decisive battle that was looked for on the plains of Champagne is still deferred, remitted to the chapter of accidents, like some former actions of this wonderful war.

Echoes of a Famous Year.

"Pity the poor Emperor!" is now the cry in fashion with us.

Well, pity him, and give him his peppercorn of praise. He is a man and suffers as a man. I should like to know that, as a ruler, he feels remorse for the nation he has hurled to destruction. He is a fugitive: worse he cannot be, unless a prisoner. One road goes his train of horses, carriages, baggage, servants—all the impedimenta of a luxurious prince. Another road goes he, to escape with his son; soiled, beaten, and weary, in want of food and drink, just like common humanity, amazed and stunned with disaster. At Chalons his pampered soldiers cursed him to his face. His favourites have changed their servility for criticism, and whisper that he is no longer of an age or temper to adopt decisions that are necessary; he ought to return to St. Cloud, and take the Prince with him. Loulou is out of date already, poor mannikin! A month ago how brave he was, how clever! Now the best word for him is that he chatters too much, and possesses an imperturbable self-confidence.

If we have pitied the poor Emperor long enough, let us for a moment consider future possibilities, that we may have the less need some day to pity ourselves.

France has interfered too much, and too vexatiously, with her neighbours,—that, I believe, is granted. If she could have been taught to let Germany alone at a less cost than of this extreme humiliation, Europe would have looked on at her receiving the discipline with mild complacency.

But she has fallen with such a great ruin, that with awe at her calamity, with compassion and sorrow, there cannot but mingle a silent apprehension of how she may endeavour to retrieve it. She is not of a humour to take her punishment meekly, and say: "It is the justice of God." If Germany plume and plunder her, she will by-and-by set on to plume and plunder somebody else, to cover the wounds of her honour. It may be little Belgium, more likely it may be ourselves. And though, as our dear old rector says, "We are in the hands of a good God," it would be comfortable to know for certain that we have plenty of powder dry, and ships to make safe our coasts in the event of a quarrel. It is so persistently asserted that we have *not*, that disquiet will creep in. For who can rest in confidence on the faith of an ally who projects secret treaties that must break the peace between us at the first offer to put them in practice? Or who can rely on a nation that will vociferously applaud such a miserable pretext for war as served Napoleon's purpose against Prussia?

When France wants a quarrel with us, a reason why will not be far to seek. Pity the poor Emperor! Pity the poor people; but let us be wise in time!

XXV.

Wild Rumour.

August 22.

"'Tis an ill wind that blows nobody any good." This ill wind of a war, which closes the continent against summer tourists who love their comfort, has filled our village by the sea to overflowing. The weather is very dry and hot; but the salt breezes temper its glow, and on the downs there is an air from the north that is delicious.

Formerly we used to have patience for our newspapers until the newsboy brought them round; this season it is the mode to go all to the post-office corner, and watch for their coming in. If we have long to wait, there are old gentlemen who have seen campaigns ever ready to beguile the time for us with a lecture on French and Prussian tactics. Many nationalities are represented on the pavement where we congregate. The Germans are in great force, and it is easy to recognise the French from the speechless, sad way they take their dispatches and move off to read them out of sight. The Germans are not so shy. They stand about in the middle of the road, open wide the big sheet of *The Times*, and proclaim the latest intelligence as loud as the bellman. It is always proud news for them!

Now and then, as to-day for instance, Mercury outstrips the mail. This noon, when I reached the library, our old philosopher launched at me a tremendous bit of information.

"Of course, ma'am, you have heard that the Emperor is safe out of this troublesome world?"

"No; dead! is he *dead*?"

"Shot himself, ma'am, so they say."

"How came that wild rumour?"

"By telegraph; to the family of the Count of Paris on the cliff. Last night."

Circumstantial at any rate, and so probable that it had the effect of truth upon most of us. The post-office corner was turned into a debating club. Never were we so impatient before for the arrival of the public news, and with the usual perversity of events the papers delayed to come until the one o'clock train.

My friend and I strayed towards the sea, then sat upon the ground, and told sad stories of the deaths of kings, delivering ourselves of many noble sentiments, until it was time to return to the library. When we reached the busy corner the throng had dispersed, all but a few who seemed in flagging spirits.

"What then, the Emperor has not shot himself?"

"Not he! He is as much alive as ever! We have been spending our sympathy on a shameful invention."

Napoleon grievously disappoints his lovers and admirers. It is not so easy to die until we *must* as their tragic imagination would have it.

XXVI.

"The Time of Illusions is past."

August 24.

A FALL in the English Funds yesterday betrays that our hope of a quick end to the war is dwindling.

The Germans neither haste nor rest; but push steadily on, sending out Uhlans by twos and threes to feel the way before them, and so far in advance often that they ought to bear charmed lives. They have shown their dread faces at St. Dizier and at Vitry-le-Français, and people begin to say in Paris, "The time of illusions is past."

Thiers and Trochu consult for hours together, and are drawing into the capital from all parts of the country every soldier who can be spared to its defence. Bazaine lost over 50,000 men, in killed, wounded, and prisoners, in the battles of last week; but Paris knows little or nothing of this. The peril of Macmahon's army is dissimulated too, and the Government holds the citizens in play with meagre and unfaithful reports, sets on at the fortifications, and offers contracts for provisioning the city for a siege. Eighty thousand oxen, to be pastured in the Bois de Boulogne, is one item of the reckoning.

There are men in France who do not despair of the empire; but they are not its ostensible ministers. The imperial government has issued a panic-manifesto to the nations of Europe, urging them, for

their own sakes, to have a care of the aggressive spirit of Prussia. We know not that any one fears Prussia, save France herself, and she has indeed much to fear.

"Let this war be done once for all!" is the cry in Germany. "Annex Alsace! Annex Lorraine! Put our enemy out of sight of our beautiful Rhine! Make her pay the forfeit for our people expelled from her cities! Punish her for her vile Turcos! Humble her to the dust for a remembrance of her cruel trespass against us!"

Forty thousand is the number by which King William counts his armies diminished since they came into France a month ago. So many under the sod; so many writhing in anguish disabled. The prisoners are few; the French do not want prisoners to encumber their retreats. For consolation he points to the great things they have achieved. But there is no rejoicing at home for his dear-bought victories. More and more men are called for to the war, and wives and children begin to feel sorely what it is to miss their bread-winners.

As their sufferings and perils increase, the bitterness of the belligerents against each other and against the neutral nations increases also. Germany is alarmed lest mediation should steal from her the lawful spoils of conquest, and France is mad at the threat of dismemberment and the prospect of a fall from her proud, domineering estate. Germany takes credit for the exercise of all manly virtues, and anticipates that the spirit of self-reliance, based on piety, labour, humility, and obedience to just laws,

which has united her, will make her henceforth invincible. Then she thunders against France that she is a spectacle of wonder to the world in her social and moral disorganisation; that she is utterly corrupt, insolent in prosperity, mean in adversity, jealous, arrogant, meddling, frivolous, mendacious!

While so many hard words are going, it would be strange if some did not fall to the share of England. Happily, hard words break no bones, and we have too much magnanimity to be angry at the railing of our neighbours in grief and perplexity. Even amongst ourselves there are ready-writers who bemoralise their country vehemently for not taking a side. The side they mean is distraught France. No matter that the quarrel is none of ours, no matter that France is all in the wrong; she is beaten, and we ought to help her. There is wisdom of Solomon against their foolish counsel: "He that meddleth with strife belonging not to him is like one that taketh a dog by the ears."

Fortitude is the best courage in our place; to isolate the conflagration our best policy. Oh that irresponsible folk would let the bellows alone! A blast from England at this moment would blow the sparks all over Europe, and there is tindery stuff to raise fire wherever they might fall. In Austria the Emperor has summoned the Diet to meet in haste, for the occasion presses. Russia, with her hand on sword, watches for her opportunity in the East. Italy is stirring; going to Rome to be crowned, to

despoil the poor Infallible of his temporal power. Garibaldi keeps a look out from Caprera. A knot of wild Irish wait in hope of extending their faction-fight, as allies of any foreign foe who may turn envious of our serene prosperity. In the midst of so many and great dangers, surely our strength is to sit still and keep our eyes about us!

Our good Queen sets the example. She is at Balmoral, taking things coolly. We wish she had stayed at Windsor to spare her hard-worked ministers weary, long journeys; but there is a certain reassurance for troubled, anxious minds in knowing that her majesty is perfectly at ease.

XXVII.

Preparing for the Worst.

August 26.

GOVERNOR TROCHU has issued a decree for the expulsion from Paris of all dangerous and useless mouths, and of all members of the community whose presence might weaken the measures to be taken for the general defence and safety. The fortifications are declared to be ready; well armed, and manned, as to the artillery, by sailors from the fleet.

Noisy exaltation is the mood of the hour. Everybody is going to die on the ramparts for the salvation of France. If the barbarians think to enter Paris, they must wait until not one of her brave citizens is left alive to defend her from such outrage. For chorus to the song we hear the chariot

wheels of the gay and luxurious, departing with prompt alacrity from their delicious Vanity Fair before the enemy cast a trench about it, and the unruly multitude begin to renew tragic memories. The shadow of the Red Spectre is already reflected on palace-windows, where soldiers guard the gates instead of loyalty and honour.

Discipline is relaxed throughout the country, and another raid of the *jacquerie* against their masters is talked of as imminent. It is asserted in the Legislative Chamber, by members of the Left, that imperial emissaries are going up and down and to and fro the provinces, sowing evil seed of hatred and murder in the minds of the peasants against the proprietors of the soil, who, as a body, are unfavourable to the dynasty. There is fruit of such seed, whether it be of Napoleon's scattering, or whether it spring from the original tares strewn by the old enemy. In a village of the Dordogne a mob of angry rustics fell foul of a young gentleman of their neighbourhood, a M. de Monneys, who had drawn a bad number at the previous conscription, and had bought for himself a substitute. It was in the market-place and on a market-day. They set upon him first with the accusation that he was one of those idle-rich who send the poor to fight and die while they stay at home themselves in peace and safety. Then they began to hustle and beat him, and at last, no rescue arriving, like furious beasts who have tasted blood, they killed him, flinging him into a dry ditch, heaping fagots upon him, and burning him alive! The Government has done

what it can to discourage the peasantry from the repetition of such brutal crime; it has sent down a special commission to investigate it and punish the perpetrators with summary justice. But everywhere there is a contempt of law. In the north-eastern departments men go about in bands, pillaging the houses of the richer sort. Work is at a pause, and hunger may be the temptation of some; but a time of war is ever a time of licence for the worst and lowest of the people.

By the last news from the army, Macmahon was at Rheims, and the Emperor in his company. What Macmahon hopes, fears, or proposes, no one dares assert. We can only guess that he means to deliver Bazaine from durance at Metz if he be not stopped by the way. If he be stopped and forced to fight, we may safely predict him another disaster as signal as the rout at Wörth; for his troops are reported of as thoroughly demoralised. Three hundred of them, men of all arms, betook themselves on Wednesday afternoon to pillaging a train of military provisions which had been shunted to let the Emperor's baggage pass. Emperors should not go out to war unless they can go as soldiers.

When the camp at Chalons was evacuated and burnt, the road to Paris was left open and undefended. It was an extraordinary movement and very disheartening. The last notice from the governor of the capital is that all the crops and produce in the departments of the Seine and Marne, which cannot be got in beforehand, will be destroyed at the approach of the Germans. This is preparing

for the worst, indeed; and the day of grace may not be very long.

XXVIII.

The Plot thickens.

August 28.

SUCH a hurly-burly this morning! Such clouds of rain driving over the downs before the strong west wind, the sea obliterated, all the beauty of the landscape shrouded in neutral grey. It is in harmony with the news of the world!

We shall hear of some grand catastrophe before long. All day Sunday, fighting was going on at Dun, Stenay, and Mouzon. Bazaine has been out again on the Courcelles road, but Macmahon cannot get near him. The Crown Prince of Saxony stands in the way, with an army where no army was expected to be, and Napoleon is being urged towards the Belgian frontier. "Fritz" and King William are closing in behind him. He has Sedan for refuge, but that is a forlorn hope.

Now indeed are the fortunes of France at stake.

Paris has no warning of the hazard. She imagines that events are going well with the Emperor and Macmahon; and though she hears that the Prussians are in full march towards her gates, Mabile still dances, and the light-hearted play. But men in authority, who know all, look awfully dismal, the Empress Regent keeps herself retired at St. Cloud, and the journalists, deluded by official half-truths, buoy up the courage of the sober citizens with fal-

lacious hopes. Meanwhile, the exodus continues day and night. Thousands of wealthy and substantial families are departing with their precious worldly goods piled on interminable trains of wagons, carts, carriages, every means of transport that can be hired for money. They are afraid of the *Reds*, these respectable folks; so they run away, and leave their neighbours, who are bound to the capital by duty or circumstances, to bear the brunt of the trouble. They honestly rank themselves with Trochu's useless mouths and faint hearts, whose presence would be a danger.

“True patriots these, for be it understood,
They leave their country for their country's good.”

Amongst the distinguished personages who have already exercised the discretion which is said to be the better part of valour, are the gay M. Ollivier, who has gone to Italy to rest from his labours, and rusticate with his fair young wife; the brave Prince Napoleon, whose urgent private affairs ever call him away from painful and perilous scenes; and Prince Pierre Bonaparte, for whose health the disturbed atmosphere of Paris is not salutary. When all is sweet and safe again, we do not despair of seeing these exemplary characters return.

The ministers still refuse to arm the National Guard; but Thiers, under whose auspices the fortifications of Paris were built, has been elected a member of the Committee of Defence.

XXIX.

In the Hospitals.

September 2.

THE sunshine has returned, and our village was gay as a fair yesterday, celebrating its annual regatta. The sands were thronged with pleasure-seekers, and the cliffs fringed with ladies looking on. It was lovely weather, bright, blue, not too serene,—something more than a capful of wind for the yachts which appeared like white birds skimming the water. There was the duck-hunt, of course, and the greased pole with the leg of mutton atop, to be won by persevering climbers: a popular bit of fun for the children, and the strangers not so well up in aquatics as our seaside population.

How trivial seem our small events against this lurid war!

On my way to the parsonage this afternoon, I picked up the latest news. It sounds like a repetition of the intelligence that came during that awful week when the battles of Courcelles, Mars-la-Tour, and Gravelotte were being fought around Metz. Only now it is the Emperor himself who is at bay, and Sedan that is the fortress in his rear.

It was the day before yesterday that the fighting began,—about Beaumont, whence it gradually extended over a very long line, not far from the Belgian frontier. The conflict was kept up until dark,

was renewed the next morning, and was still going on last night when the telegram was despatched from Bouillon. The carnage is horrible; the country-people are flying across the border, and the woods are full of stragglers from Macmahon's army. One body of it lost their encampment, their guns, and a host of prisoners at Beaumont, on Tuesday, and the battle yesterday was still going against France.

The spacious, pleasant room was full of light, fresh air, and flowery fragrance, of busy needle-women, flannel, and calico. We mustered all the thimbles we could, on a summons to work for the sick and wounded in the war.

"Let me read you something about them," said our hostess. "The saddest scenes of the war are in the hospitals. This is in the church at Spichenren; it is a doctor who writes, I think."

"We have now to make an evening farewell visit to the wounded. In the schoolrooms, which this morning were overflowing, all have had their wounds fresh bound. Through the opened windows a breeze blows in. The dead are removed, and all seem in a refreshing sleep. It is otherwise in the church. French soldiers, operated on and transportable, bedded on stretchers, form an avenue, right and left, up the graveyard to the church-porch. In the dusky vestibule we step across some severely wounded, who continually creep from out the corners, and with a part of their chaff bedding block the way. On the gospel-side of the choir the altar is removed, and the floor decked with

straw, on which lie the sorely wounded of Frosard's army, strewn about, some naked, some half clothed, some silent, with closed eyes and lips compressed, others pitifully wailing. The pictures of the Passion of Christ, and the Stations of the Cross, which adorn the circuit of the walls, appeared in solemn harmony with the pangs of the mangled sufferers, and in the gloom of the evening twilight involuntarily the deep symbolism of the story smote upon the conscience. The only light which burnt in the choir was the still small flame, known as the perpetual lamp. In this chiaroscuro one had to grope about for the men. Except two, wounded in the thigh, who sat amongst the dying on the altar-steps, smoking their cigars, all were hopeless. Under the statue of the Mater Dolorosa leaned a young French officer, shot through the chest, who rocked his head on the bosom of a Franciscan nurse. At my signal that the last hour of the unhappy man had struck, tears filled the eyes of the faithful attendant. The sisters-of-mercy find it hard to resist the entreaties of the wounded. They will beg for water when they cannot swallow a drop; now they will be laid on this side, now on that; now they hope to relieve their pangs by having their heads raised, and now they seem to experience a lightening of their dying agonies as they stretch out their cold, rigid, staring hands, and to close their eyes in death more peacefully if permitted to clasp our hands,—’”

“Enough! Enough!”—

It was enough. It must be a great cause, in-

deed, to justify the monstrous cruelty of war. Multiply this scene in the church by the Spichenberg twenty-fold, and the tale of misery is not yet made out. The wounded now far exceed the power of their own surgeons and nurses to cope with them, and there are thousands of sick besides: rheumatism, typhus, and cholera are in the camps and in the besieged places. For three days after the battle of Mars-la-Tour, the dead lay unburied, the wounded unsuccoured. The dead on that field of blood were never numbered. They were cast into the grave-pits, prince and peasant-soldier, friend and foe together. Many noble houses of Germany mourn for that victory. Their sons fought like the grooms of the army, like the knights of chivalry, and fell where they fought for the redemption of the Fatherland.

"The little ones in the infant school have ravelled all this *charpie*; the medical orders as to cleansing the linen of soap first were scrupulously obeyed," says one of the school-visitors, displaying a pillow-case full of the soft commodity.

"If I were badly hurt, I would rather have my wounds washed in plain water, and jog along in the open wagon than go into hospital. Men can but die once; and if they are to live, the more sweet air they can get, the better their chance," observes an old campaigner.

Another lady, of Indian experiences, offers to show us a way to make the cholera-belts more convenient than that we have devised. The work

goes on, and talk with it; an amusing variety of opinions, and as full of contradiction as the public prints.

The elders regard the war much more philosophically than the young people. *One* is not afraid to avow that she has no interest in it: she is sorry for the sufferers, but there always was some sore trouble in the world, and there always will be, while men are men. She is not carried away by her feelings, and expects no permanent results. When the fighting is over, everything will go on in a little while as if no fighting had been, and twenty years hence it will be as much forgotten as all the wars that have gone before it, as the Crimean war for instance: and who can recollect, without thinking, the dates of the Crimean battles now? Ah! many, many must recollect them, and keep them as days of mourning still!

Another elder expresses her private assurance that "Mariolatry" is at the bottom of the war; France is idolatrous, and therefore given over to a reprobate mind. Presently afterwards she states her belief that if England had a European quarrel in which her Sepoys could be made available, she would have no more scruple in using them than the Emperor has in using his Turcos: two sentiments so entirely out of harmony with the common-sense of the assembly that they provoke rather warm rejoinders. But the paradoxical old lady does not heed them. She will not frame her views according to logic. It is remarked that France has coveted

the Rhine provinces since Louis XIV. was king, and has fought for them, how often?

The old lady answers: "And France has a right to them! The Rhine is her natural boundary; and if those things could be settled peaceably, as they ought to be, I would say, let her have them."

She speaks as one having authority, but an irreverent advocate on the German part cries out: "What! to extend Mariolatry, and spread the contagion of her reprobate mind?"

A judicious person takes prompt advantage of the full stop that ensues, to speculate in a clear suave voice whether those beautiful old houses, with richly carven fronts, in the vicinity of the cathedral at Strasbourg, have sustained any damage in the siege. No one has heard. But the cathedral itself has sustained some injuries. The bishop went out last week to the enemy's camp, to entreat that the women and children might leave the city; for many have been killed and more wounded in the bombardment. One day a shell burst in a school of poor girls, and destroyed and maimed we know not how many little innocents. But General Werder had no power to vouchsafe the grace that was asked. He said the city would never surrender if its women and children were safe; a truce of twenty-four hours was all he could grant.

Phalsbourg is mentioned as a place where the national stories of Erckmann-Chatrian have made us almost at home. Brave old Phalsbourg! The town is deserted and battered to pieces, but the citadel stands intact, keeping the high-road against the

German trains, and forcing them to go a long way round about.

Anent this the conversation is renewed with vivacity.

"That is all fair against reinforcements and material of war. But what a monstrous cruelty it was of the French Government to refuse the poor wounded the short cut through Luxembourg to Aix-la-chapelle, and so many of the wounded their own too! A breach of neutrality indeed! As if wounded men were not effectually neutralised! And up gets Palikao in the Legislative Chamber, and announces that forty thousand rifles will be delivered in Paris from abroad by the end of next week. *That* is not a breach of neutrality, I suppose!"

"Neutral law does not condemn the export of arms. But those rifles are not sent by England. If they were, I should like to hang somebody!"

"I see, you are for a benevolent despotism. Perhaps it would be safer to amend the law. You might hang the wrong person."

"There is a dearth of noble incidents in this war."

"Great events have crowded out the details. That stand of the Germans all day at Mars-la-Tour was grand. And they are behaving with consideration to the poor country people."

"Is King William a really good old man, or is he only employing set words in his pious telegrams to Queen Augusta, when he thanks God for his victories?"

"His mother, Queen Louisa, was excellent; pro-

bably her teaching remains in him. He *sounds* sincere and honest. Try to put yourself in his place, and then consider what he has to thank God for!"

"Can you understand the Empress letting her son follow the army in its disasters? She has Spanish blood in her veins, but it is early yet to send him to be inured to slaughter. What a blessing that he has missed the opportunity of learning the duties that his name imposes on him!"

"Yes, indeed! We want no more Great Napoleons. I was listening this morning to my ancient gardener, who was a boy in the old war-time. He says people who talk of hard times now should have lived then, from 1809 to 1814, when the gallon-loaf that is fourteen-pence now was three shillings and nine-pence, and working poor-folks did not get a bite of wheaten bread from one week's end to another. A white frock, a fustian jacket, were the best of their clothing, and potatoes the chief of their diet."

"It is a sign that the world grows kinder, to see us here doing what we can for the relief of the sick and wounded in this sad war. But here is coffee: ten minutes for rest, and then to our needles again."

XXX.

Sedan.

THE catastrophe has come with a vengeance! The first act of the tragedy of France is closed. The whole army of Macmahon has capitulated to the enemy, and the Emperor is a prisoner-of-war.

Paris has broken into revolution, and, as a panacea for all her griefs, has proclaimed the Republic. The Empress Regent has abandoned her post, and the ministers have either decamped or got into hiding. Not that they were in any risk of their precious persons, but simply because it is the fashion in France for great people to care for themselves first, and to let private fears overrule their sense of public duty. We had a king once who ran away; but he never came back again, neither he nor his.

The imperialists have fairly owned themselves unable to govern. From defect of right and defect of courage, they cannot face the difficulties of the military collapse, and the noise of popular clamour. They have retired from business, and a few mixed members of the republican faction have laid hold of the reins of power to try what they can do for the salvation of the country. They have served no apprenticeship to statecraft, but they are not afraid; as if it were an easy task to govern men! France must expect to pay for their inexperience. It is a rash step to eject even bad servants who are used to the house, at the moment it catches fire. Napoleon made this war, and it would have been well to let him make the peace that ought to ensue on his shameful capitulation at Sedan. A disastrous peace it must be, let it come now, or let it be delayed, and no hand but his should sign it. With his name to such a story the old legend of Napoleonism would lose its fatal fascination.

Neither ancient nor modern history records any

capitulation on so vast a scale as the capitulation of France at Sedan.

To recite it straight forward:—Last week there was fighting from Monday morning until Thursday afternoon between Macmahon's army and the united forces of King William, "Fritz," and the Crown Prince of Saxony. There were also two furious sorties out of Metz, which Prince Frederick-Charles defeated. Bazaine could not succeed in breaking anywhere the ring of steel and fire in which he is enclosed; nor could Macmahon with all his strength, nor the Emperor with all his devices, hinder the King's son from driving them back upon Sedan, and having laid them fast, from driving them to the despair of an unconditional surrender. How to extenuate such an awful consummation? It is the work of the gods! The stars in their courses have fought against France! That is the safe old philosophy of the matter, if we are pleased to leave it there.

For plain fact, however, Macmahon's men had lost heart, and had no confidence in their leaders. They had no food either on the finishing day, and fasting men are half beaten before they see the enemy. Then discipline was lost, and the valour of many followed suit. Seven thousand soldiers threw down their arms at Beaumont, and during the four days' havoc fifteen thousand are computed to have fled into Belgium, thus making a sure and certain end of their troubles for this war. The butchery was as horrible as at Mars-la-Tour, and of the Germans the Saxons and Bavarians bore the worst

of it. The burning of Bazeilles was perhaps the cruelest episode in the long battle, but it was full of cruel episodes. The very bravest went to the charge at last with the fear of death in their faces. Kings and emperors care no more for the men they use to fight their quarrels, than we common folk care for the fagots of sticks we use to keep the fire aglow on a winter's night!

The turning point of the battle was on Thursday, about two o'clock of the afternoon. The French, at that decisive moment, were being driven from their last commanding position, and General Sheridan, an American witness present with King William's staff, shut up his glass, and said: "The battle is won!"

Thereupon, rejoicing and congratulation amongst the Prussian officers. Somebody asked Bismarck if he thought the Emperor was in Sedan. The Chancellor replied with grim humour: "Napoleon is not very wise, but he would hardly be so foolish as to let himself be caught in Sedan just now." For once Bismarck was wrong. Napoleon was in Sedan, and a fatal trap he found it. There was no way of escape for him, no place of repentance or salvation; and while the Prussians were conjecturing where their enemy might be, he was ordering that the white flag should be displayed from the walls.

For some time it was invisible in the hell of fire and smoke that swept the *enceinte*. Fighting was going on inside the fortifications, and in the suburbs outside; hand-to-hand fighting, desperate, ferocious. Towards four o'clock there was a lull

in the storm of shot and shell. At five the firing had ceased along the whole line. The royal staff were speculating what the silence meant, when a French officer, escorted by two Uhlans, was seen coming at a hard trot up the bridle-path from the town to the King's post, one of the Uhlans bearing a flag of truce. The French army had given up. The officer came to ask for terms of surrender. All was confusion, rage, and despair in the imperial camp. Macmahon was wounded. General Wimpffen, who had taken his command, could do nothing for the interference and vacillation of his master. The soldiers were hungered and furious. For days past they had been driven to the slaughter, like game by the beaters, and they turned upon their officers at last, with curses, menaces, and violence. To this had come the boasted might of France! Old braves, when they saw her dishonour, turned their faces to the wall, and wept like children!

The flag of truce was a welcome sight to the Germans, but the answer the officer received from von Moltke was short and sharp.

"Return to the town, and bid the governor report himself immediately to the King of Prussia. If he does not arrive within an hour, our guns will open again. You may tell the commandant it is useless his trying to obtain any other terms than unconditional surrender."

The French officer rode away, "Fritz" came up to the King's post, and all the world spent the interval in wonder and surmises. The hour of grace

was barely over when a cry arose amongst the Germans, then a thrilling "Hurrah!" and in a few minutes more appeared the Governor of Sedan, General O'Reille, his breast glittering with medals, Queen Victoria's Crimean medal amongst the rest. He was the bearer of an autograph letter from the Emperor to King William. The staff and escort formed up, and the victorious old King stood a few paces in advance to receive the missive of his defeated rival.

Here is the historic document:—

Mon Frère,

*Ne pouvant pas mourir à la tête de mon armée,
je viens mettre mon épée aux pieds de Votre Majesté.*

NAPOLÉON.

King William called into council over the Emperor's letter his son, Bismarck, von Moltke, and von Roon. The King wrote the answer. The surrender of Napoleon was accepted, and he was invited to an interview the next morning. The terms of capitulation for the fortress and the army were absolute. Men, guns, horses, material of war, were all to be given up. And towards eight o'clock General O'Reille rode back to his master in the town, with his heavy tidings of shame and sorrow.

The news ran like fire through the triumphant host; and all round Sedan rose a hymn of praise to God who had given the victory to the Fatherland. It was enough to stir the dead! Many a soul passing through the gates of the grave must have heard

it echoing along the shadows of the way! And night and silence brooded on the awful field!

And on the morrow what befel?

When the Germans had sung their thanksgiving to the Lord of glory, they rested for a few hours upon their arms, and in the grey dawn rose refreshed, and stood in order of battle all about the town, where the Emperor was still debating with his generals, "Surrender or Extermination?" At ten o' the morning, if the capitulation was not completed, the Germans had promised to bombard the place again, and to shell the unfortunate army lying outside the walls. Napoleon looked forth over hill and plain. Far as eye could see, the enemy possessed the ground. Wimpffen besought his master, for the honour of the flag, to let him take a few volunteers as a forlorn hope, and cut him a way through the foe, protesting that he himself would rather die than sign the ignominious deed of "surrender." But Napoleon did not find it possible to die. He found only civil courage to have pity on the living wreck of his army, and to accept the humiliation that he could by no means avoid.

It was about eight o'clock when he started from Sedan to give himself up to King William. A few of his staff accompanied him, and his train, splendid and cumbrous even here, was left to follow at leisure. It was his purpose to go straight to the royal headquarters; but notice of his coming was carried in haste to Bismarck, who intercepted him on the road as he drew near to Donchery. What the Chancellor

had to say was that King William would not receive his prisoner until the capitulation was signed. The Emperor gloomily assented, and desired to confer with Bismarck instead; he wanted some amelioration of the terms in favour of his officers.

A place was sought where they might be private, and Napoleon left his carriage. Close by was the cottage of a hand-loom weaver, a wretched squalid place, not fit to enter; but the weaver brought out two rush chairs, and set them under the shadow of the wall for the accommodation of his guests: then stood a pace or two off, but always within earshot, while they talked. A crowd of witnesses besides loitered about at a more respectful distance.

Napoleon opened the conference by craving the commiseration of the great statesman whose noble work for Germany it had been his iniquitous, self-interested purpose to undo. He said that he had never desired this war; the nation had forced him upon this war. Bismarck set the Emperor's excuses aside. The present opportunity was good to consider how the war might be ended, rather than how it had been begun. He spoke of peace: peace ought to ensue on the capitulation of Sedan. France, Napoleon, must avow that they had lost the game, and should be ready to pay the stakes.

Then came out a notable example of imperialism in difficult and perilous straits.

Said the Emperor: "I have no power to negotiate a peace."

"No power! With whom then shall the King of Prussia treat?" Bismarck demanded.

Napoleon rejoined that the Empress and the Council of Regency in Paris were trustees for the empire in his absence.

Bismarck had nothing more to say. France was in pitiable case indeed! Here was her saviour, her sovereign, cowardly denying his responsibility; casting the fault on her; basely severing his luck from her disaster; committing her very life and death, at this worst crisis of her history, to the faltering hands of a woman!

They separated. Napoleon returned to his friends, and Bismarck marched off to announce to the King the grave "*Non Possumus*" that the Emperor of the French had interposed in the way of peace.

But the principle of the capitulation he had admitted, and now von Moltke appeared upon the scene, and was met by General Wimpffen and the Governor of Sedan, to arrange the precise terms of it. A considerate relaxation was made on behalf of the officers, and by eleven o'clock the act was signed, sealed, and delivered:—"The garrison and army of Sedan to surrender as prisoners of war, to be sent into Germany; the officers to keep their side-arms and personal property, and to be liberated on their parole not to serve against the King of Prussia if the war goes on; all horses, guns, and munitions of war to be given up." The detention of the Emperor in Germany was understood as a chief article of the capitulation.

This famous act accomplished, Napoleon was permitted to drive on to the château of Belle-Vue, a pleasant country-house on an eminence not far from Sedan, with the river running between. It stands in a garden and shrubbery, and commands a fine prospect of the town and the valley of the Meuse. Here, towards two of the afternoon, King William came to receive his prisoner. "Fritz" was with him, and they were attended by a full staff of general-officers, and a splendid guard. Napoleon awaited the King on a wooded knoll in the grounds. They shook hands when they met, then entered the house together, "Fritz" following them up the stairs to the *salon*, from which they passed alone into a little glazed cabinet beyond. "Fritz" shut the door upon them, and stood outside.

There were no witnesses of this interview, but the secrets of it, if secrets they be, have lapsed out.

King William spoke first: "God," said he, "has given to my arms the victory in the war proclaimed by your majesty against Prussia."

The Emperor instantly averred, as he had done to Bismarck in the morning, that the war was none of his making; he had been urged to it by the public opinion of France.

The King answered: "It was your ministers who created that public opinion."

There was a silence, and then the victor paid a just tribute of praise to the bravery with which the French soldiers had fought.

"They have fought bravely," said Napoleon.

"But, sire, your troops possess a discipline that has been wanting lately to my army. Your artillery won the battle. Your artillery is the finest in the world."

King William bowed, and observed that for some years the Prussian army had been availing itself of all new ideas, and watching the experiments of other nations.

"Prince Frederick-Charles decided the fate of the day," suggested Napoleon. "It was his army that carried our position?"

"It was my son's army that fought at Sedan," said the King.

"And where then is Prince Frederick-Charles?"

"He is with seven army corps before Metz."

The Emperor recoiled as though he had been struck; but he did not say what amazed him in the information. When he had recovered his self-possession, King William asked if he had any wishes to express, or any conditions to propose.

"None," said Napoleon. "I am powerless. I am a prisoner." And again to the King, as before to the Chancellor, he declared that all authority, all government, was, for this crisis, remitted to the Empress and the ministers in Paris.

The King then named Wilhelmshöhe, near Cassel, as the place of detention for the prisoner, and with that they parted. In the *salon* afterwards, the Emperor avowed himself to "Fritz" as profoundly touched by the King's benevolent condescension.

Calm, observant lookers-on report that though

Napoleon was jaded and weary, and somewhat down-cast, he was far from despair, or from any apprehension of present death by the disease under which he groans. The only anxiety he manifested was that he might not be shown to his own soldiers. But, to avoid that mortification, he was obliged to pass through the German lines. He stared out of his carriage window with watchful eyes; and on an Englishman running forward to salute him, he did not omit to acknowledge the courtesy.

That night the Emperor rested at Donchery, and left it the next morning in a prodigious storm, under an escort of Prussian and Würtemberg cavalry. Not many people saw him go by. A few stood in the rain at their doors, but silent and cowed. If any pitied their fallen sovereign, none betrayed it; none found heart to bid him be of good-cheer in captivity, or to promise him a welcome home in better days. The horse-bells jangled merrily, and the Würtembergers sang, as they trotted along the road, in celebration of the victory. This was Sunday. That night the escort and prisoner halted at Verviers, and early on Monday continued their route to Aix-la-chapelle. Here Prince Pierre Bonaparte met his cousin, who was overheard to tell him, that he was not nearly so low as his enemies supposed, and he should soon come back, and reckon with those who were proving themselves against him.

He will have to reckon with all France then!

XXXI.

Paris Revolts.

THE capitulation of Sedan was completed on Friday. On Saturday the ministers began to break the news to the people by announcing that Macmahon's army had suffered a reverse, and a loss of 40,000 prisoners. They did not dare confess the whole calamity at once, not even in the Legislative Chamber, and the day closed with the end of the tragedy unrevealed. The deputies had, however, been warned to meet again at night, while Paris slept; and Palikao then took courage to tell them the worst. A dreadful sob sounded through the assembly. After a pause of emotion, Jules Favre spoke; bringing forward a motion to declare that Napoleon and his dynasty had forfeited all the rights conferred by the Constitution, and demanding the appointment of a parliamentary committee, to be entrusted with full powers of government and the mission of driving the invaders out of France. The Chamber received these revolutionary proposals in dead silence, and at two of the morning the House broke up.

The next day was Sunday, the 4th of September. The Emperor was far on his road to Germany, and a proclamation of his ministers at length unrolled the catalogue of national disasters before the deluded inhabitants of the capital.

"Frenchmen! A great misfortune has befallen

Echoes of a Famous Year.

the country. After three days of heroic struggles, kept up by the army of Marshal Macmahon against 300,000 enemies, 140,000 of our soldiers have been made prisoners. General Wimpffen, who had taken the command of the army, replacing Marshal Macmahon, who was grievously wounded, has signed a capitulation. This cruel reverse does not daunt our courage. Paris is now in a state of defence. The military resources of the country are being organised. Within a few days a new army will be under the walls of Paris, and another army is in formation on the banks of the Loire. Your patriotism, your concord, your energy will save France. The Emperor has been made prisoner in this contest. The Government desires to co-operate with the public authorities in taking all measures required by the gravity of these events."

This proclamation was the last official act of the imperialists. At the first breath of popular commotion the Empress fled in disguise from the Tuileries, and the Council of Regency retreated into private life. Never perhaps was there a more miserable abdication of right and duty in the face of danger!

The Legislative Chamber had been called to meet again at noon. Only then was Paris beginning to appreciate the magnitude of the trouble that had come upon the country; and while the members talked and settled nothing, the populace rose, and declared its will in the streets, by pulling down the imperial ensigns wherever they were found. Shortly after five, when the Chamber reassembled, a crowd of tumultuary folk swarmed into the House,

crying out for the republic, and the deposition of the dynasty. And under the pressure of an indescribable excitement and uproar outside the dynasty was actually pronounced to be at an end, and the republic was actually proclaimed by M. Gambetta, a young member of the Left, and a select few of his colleagues. Most of the deputies, nominees of Napoleon, and sworn friends to his policy, immediately went out, and the clamorous people were suffered to remain in possession of the House.

Then Paris seemed to go mad. There must have been far more sober, orderly men indoors than there were lovers of change in the streets; but they kept quiet and made no sign, no demonstration or appeal on behalf of established authority. The revolutionary sort had the day to themselves. Thousands were running about, laughing and crying for joy, embracing, shaking hands, singing the "*Marseillaise*" at the top of their shrill voices. The ruin that had overwhelmed the army, the invader in full march upon the city, were forgotten in a senseless frantic delight over some imaginary benefit to accrue from having got rid of their master.

"*Vive la République! Vive la Commerce! Vive toutes les Nations!*" shouted the workmen, hoping perhaps, poor fellows, that their dethronement of the Emperor would bring back peace and plenty to do.

After the Empress had deserted the Tuileries, the Mobile Guard took possession of it, and the imperial flag was hauled down. The soldiers and the national guards tore the eagles from their en-

signs, and fraternised with the revolted populace. M. Rochefort, a pet of the Reds, a very scurrilous writer, in prison since the spring, was released and carried in triumph to the Hôtel de Ville, and vehemently cheered when he showed himself upon the balcony. Busts and portraits of the Emperor and Empress were flung out of the windows, tossed into the Seine, smashed, torn into fragments, and divided as relics by the mob, all in a spirit of wild mischief. A little more revel, and it will be athirst for blood.

Thus, in a few hours, was a revolution made after the usual Paris type. The imperialists sat so loose in their places that they were blown clean out of them by a hullabaloo. Then a Provisional Government set itself up, comprising the more serious minded members of the Left, republicans of moderate views, and for the most part men of mature age. They have confirmed General Trochu in his post as Governor of Paris; M. Arago is to be mayor, and the Count de Keratry prefect of police. The ministers are Gambetta, Jules Favre, Jules Simon, Eugène Pelletan, Jules Ferry, Crémieux, Ernest Picard, and Grévy. How they will divide the toil of government among them, and how they will carry it on, France has yet to discover. If they succeed in driving out the Germans, their seizure of power will be thankfully condoned; if they fail, the nation will curse them as its manner is to curse luckless and incompetent rulers. And with reason. For the nation did not call them to rule it. If the nation could now make its voice heard against the vocifer-

ous howling of a minority in Paris, it would more likely call upon Napoleon to finish the work he began, and not meanly try to sneak away from the disgrace that to him belongs.

The feeling of the country at this bitter moment is undeniably a wish for peace: the best peace that can be made, with such victors as King William and Bismarck; but, at any cost, *peace*. That was the echo of every yell in Paris on Sunday: "*Vive la Commerce! Vive toutes les Nations!*" was the cry of the craftsmen. And the apathy with which the majority of the citizens let the revolution be made was the expression of their belief that the republic will give them peace.

But will it? *Hardly!* The first declaration of the men at the head of the republic is that France shall suffer no dismemberment. Quit of the Emperor, they hold her quit of the crimes of the Empire. "Not an inch of our territory, not a stone of our fortresses, will we yield to the enemy!" is the word spoken. And if they stick to that the war will most assuredly go on.

XXXII.

Talk about it.

"Now, at last, don't you pity the poor Emperor?" urges my reproachful, pathetic friend.

"I pity the old soldiers who turned their faces to the wall at Sedan, and cried like children for the dishonour of their arms; not the Emperor, base

enough to plead before the enemy that this wicked war was no fault of his."

"But consider how much he has done for France."

"Especially during the last six weeks! To save his crown, he, a mere prince elected, has lost France her place amongst nations, and sunk her lower than ever prince did before; he has earned her misery and mortification unspeakable; and she will have to kiss the dust lower yet for an end of his material benefits. I'll reserve my pity until he is past doing more mischief. I have no honest pity at his service while he is in such health as to enjoy a pleasant anticipation of revenges to come."

"He has no magnanimity, no real greatness of character; but still I am sorry for him. The little Prince has arrived at Worthing. I hope the Empress is safe somewhere. Wilhelmshöhe is a very beautiful little palace, and the scenery in the neighbourhood quite lovely. Such prison will be paradise to the poor Emperor, after all the fatigues and dangers he has gone through—if his conscience does not plague him, as you evidently think it ought."

"His conscience is too robust ever to plague him much! Has it not excused him of blame for this war?"

"I wish he had covered his mouth before denying his part and lot in that. Prince and people must stand or fall together in presence of an enemy. But still—I pity him!"

So be it. Sympathy never fails the unfortunate

in conspicuous, high position. Napoleon a prisoner is a very touching figure to many sincere admirers. To my discernment, a vein of parody runs through all his adventures. To me, the touching figures are those other prisoners who lay starving, after the capitulation, in the bivouacs about Sedan, and are now footing it all the dreary long road to Germany—140,000 of them! And touching figures, most touching, are the soldiers returning from disastrous battles and long marches, all in shattered disarray; gone their gilding and gay colours, gone their pride and confidence. Every hour of the day they are to be seen coming into Paris, ragged, besmirched, wayworn, hungered, dejected, ashamed. They are the escaped from the wreck of Macmahon's army. As they pass along the streets the people scowl. They lie on the stones to rest, they sleep, and starve in public places. No one has a good word for them; no one succours them. Yet these unfortunates did their utmost. The Cuirassiers have saved but a life here and there out of thousands, and one small cart is enough to carry all their baggage. If they had returned victorious, what a different reception would they have had! Macmahon, Wimpffen, and many old officers have refused to return. They have preferred to go prisoners into Germany, rather than to go free on parole in France. Exile and captivity are bad to bear, but the contempt of friends is worse.

We feel as if we needed to take breath a little while, to pick up some loose threads of the story; but the swift reel of events runs on without rest or

pause. King William resumed his march towards Paris on Sunday afternoon. In ten days he will be before her walls. Meantime—

“Meantime, let us hope there will be peace; for I am sick of war! Have you read how Colonel Pemberton was killed at Sedan?—one of *The Times* correspondents.”

“Yes; he was over-bold in his curiosity—he was a soldier, and died like one. The ‘specials’ have made a great figure this war; they have shown true British pluck and perseverance, for which all the world is indebted to them.”

“And the good old Bishop of Strasbourg is dead—died on the first of September. He had returned from the Council at Rome very weary; and his journey out of the city, to entreat the besiegers for the people, and the refusal of his prayer, quite ended him. He only survived that pious effort four days.”

“He is taken from the trial to come! The Germans mean to keep Strasbourg, when they get it; they are dealing with it so leniently. The city suffers, but the siege is not pressed as sieges used to be. When I was there, listening to the people in the market-place, I fancied myself in Germany. To a stranger, it looks more German still than French. How long ago is it since Goethe met his Frederica in Strasbourg, wearing her Alsatian peasant-costume, and was disenchanted? Just a hundred years ago, less one. The pastors’ families of Alsace were German and provincial still, after a century of union with France. The common people are German now.

It needs a law to enforce the speaking of French in the village schools."

"You are thinking that Alsace will have to become German again, and that the re-conversion will not prove so very painful?"

"That thought was in my mind. The Germans will not forego what they win. These new brooms, the republicans, promise to sweep the invader out of France; but new brooms are ironically proverbial for better promise than performance. The Germans will be in France next year at this time."

"For people who have brought the whole art of lying to such perfection as the French, they remain singularly credulous. You recollect the false telegram of a great victory which preceded the bad news of Wörth? There was just such another before Sedan. Bazaine and Macmahon were said to have met, to have annihilated Prince Frederick-Charles, taken thirty guns and a host of prisoners; and, no doubt, many persons believed it."

"And many persons believe now that the raw conscripts of the republic will be able to stand before the Prussians, though the trained soldiers of the empire gave way before them wherever they met. Let Jules Favre and his colleagues have all the credit they deserve for pure, patriotic, good intentions; but they are more heady than wise. The passionate animosity of the Parisians, venting their exasperation in furious cries of 'No peace while one Prussian pollutes the soil!' is not a force to rely on; yet it is on that force the new rulers are basing their defiance."

"It was villainous of the Emperor to leave France in the lurch! It was dastardly to pretend to Bismarck that he had no power to settle the debts he had incurred for the nation. He has the air of a shifty insolvent, stealing out of the way for cool and quiet, while the creditors levy an execution on the property! His wife and family must do the best they can."

"Pray, finish your illustration! it is appropriate. Or shall I? 'After brief eclipse, the shifty insolvent emerges from his retreat, and, with a wink to the world at large, slips into his old place, and resumes his old trade.' Eh?"

XXXIII.

Harvest Thanksgiving.

September 10.

LAST Wednesday evening the harvest thanksgiving service was celebrated at St. Saviour's-on-the-Cliff, and the thank-offering was devoted to the national fund in aid of the sick and wounded in the war.

There is an old saying that "drought never brought dearth in England"; and contrary to the general expectation, through the parched summer, the crops have turned out a fair average, and the wheat-harvest has been excellent. Since it was gathered in we have had stormy weather with abundance of rain. It was very wild on Wednesday; windy, showery in gusts, and the air heavy with thunder. Just as I turned upon the cliff, a

sudden rosy illumination spread over the sky, caused by a beautiful, awful zigzag of lightning out of the sunset-flushed clouds. I never witnessed anything quite like it before.

The church was decorated with texts in ever-green leaves and roses, and, according to old harvest custom, "Like flames upon the altar shone the sheaves." There was a very full congregation, and many strangers, and refugees from the troubles in France. A few who were late, like myself, stayed about the porch, where we lost the voices sometimes, thinking our own thoughts, listening to the boom of the sea, to the rustle of the wind in the crisp leaves. But from time to time the clear sweet chanting of the children pierced our abstraction.

"O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer: hearken, O God of Jacob. Behold, O God our defender, and look upon the face of Thine Anointed. For one day in Thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of ungodliness. For the Lord God is a light and defence: the Lord will give grace and worship, and no good thing shall He withhold from them that live a godly life."

"Lord, what is man that Thou hast such respect unto him; or the son of man that Thou so regardest him? Man is like a thing of nought: his time passeth away like a shadow. Bow Thy heavens, O Lord, and come down; send down Thine hand from above: deliver me, and take me out of the great waters."

"Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem: praise thy God, O Sion. For He hath made fast the bars of thy gates; and hath blessed thy children within thee. He maketh peace in thy borders; and filleth thee with the flour of wheat. Happy are the people that are in such a case: yea, blessed are the people who have the Lord for their God."

As I walked home after the service it was dark. The clouds were blowing about, the black trees waving against their blackness. High in the upper heavens gleamed out a few stars, but there was every sign of a tempestuous night.

A tempestuous night indeed! A night of sorrowful remembrance. For in the thick gloom of it foundered, off Finisterre, an ironclad, the *Captain*, called the best fighting ship in the British navy. She had gone to sea with the fleet on her second trial trip; every other ship weathered the storm, but she went down with her crew of over five hundred men, within ten minutes of being struck. Only the night watch escaped. They got off in a boat. The commander, Hugh Burgoyne, was on deck, and had the same chance; but he stayed by his ship, and perished with her: a Cross of Valour man.

Most of the crew were south-coast folk, many of them island-folk, and the grief and consternation are sad. The bishop has directed the clergy to preach sermons and make collections throughout the diocese for the succour of the widows and orphans of the men.

"Blessed is he whose hope is in the Lord his God. The Lord helpeth them that are fallen: He defendeth the fatherless and the widow. He healeth those that are broken in heart. Blessed are they whose strength is in the Lord. Who going through the vale of misery use it for a well. Unto the God of gods appeareth every one of them in Sion."

XXXIV.

England Suggests an Armistice.

September 12.

THE spoil surrendered to the Germans at Sedan is prodigious: 400 field guns, 70 mitrailleuses, 150 fortress guns, 10,000 horses; all these besides 25,000 prisoners captured, and the whole army, 83,000, by capitulation. The strength of France is indeed diminished, nor yet have we seen the end of her losses.

Paris is very dejected after her fit of revolutionary enthusiasm. The waifs and strays of Macmahon's army are still arriving by twos and threes; forlorn poor souls, but dangerous as forlorn; demoralised by defeat after defeat, and ready to infect with their indiscipline all the young soldiers they may come in contact with. Victor Hugo announces that he has gone home simultaneously with the republic to defend the capital of civilisation from invasion by the barbarians. Alas! it is not rhetoric will defend her from shot and shell. Five *corps d'armée* are marching on the city with orders to take up their respective positions, at a distance

of ten leagues, on Wednesday the 14th, that is, the day after to-morrow. The deluge is come, and the loudest of those who were going to die on the ramparts are leaving her to her fate; following the brilliant example of the imperialist adventurers.

Bismarck eyes the new masters of France very grimly, and begs to know how those gentlemen of the pavement propose to guarantee that France will ratify any conditions they may make, if King William condescend to treat with them. The reply is that a Constituent Assembly is summoned to meet in October early. But meanwhile Jules Favre, as foreign minister, propounds his policy in a circular addressed to all the courts of Europe, announcing that France will maintain the integrity of her dominion at all hazards. There is a querulous cry amongst ourselves that England ought to intervene more decisively; as if England had but to speak to be obeyed. The combatants would no doubt thankfully be reconciled if any neutral power could devise an easy way, and honourable for both. But bitter war stops all easy ways, and those who would most glory to exercise the blessed office of peacemakers cannot, at their own will, pluck down its bloody barriers. Lord Granville suggests an armistice. If the belligerents can agree upon it, Bismarck will be compelled to state his terms, and the gentlemen of the pavement will have time to reconsider their policy with regard to the military strength of France.

XXXV.

Thiers' Mission.

September 14.

THE Germans were ordered to be up before Paris to-day, and they are up, some of them within eight miles of it; and King William's head-quarters are at Meaux.

The Queen and all our royal folk are in Scotland, holiday-making; but some of the ministers remain in London, and the chiefs have never been farther off than Walmer Castle, a famous watchtower towards France. To them arrived yesterday M. Thiers, charged by the Provisional Government with a diplomatic mission. There was a hope that he would bring some practicable scheme of peace for the neutral powers to propose to Germany. But no, he asks the impossible; asks that England will take arms with France, to drive the invaders back across the frontier, if they do not retire at her remonstrance!

Adversity has taught the rulers of France nothing! Unhappy nation, with neither head nor heart for her reverses! It is pitiful to hear her crying war to the knife against her enemy, and then to see her turning with clasped hands and tears in her eyes to one and another of her friends, entreating that they will intercede for her or help her. But while she insults and defies her conquerors, how can her friends intercede for her with any grace? As for taking arms with her, defeat has

not made that right which was wrong before. We are sure that she will have to pay for her aggressive vanity; and we are equally sure that Bismarck will reckon the price with her, and not with us. We *talk*: there is one plausible proposition here for dismantling Strasbourg, Metz, and her other eastern fortress towns, and leaving them still in her possession; but does anybody imagine that will appease victorious Germany? Another proposition is to make Alsace neutral territory between the ancient rivals, and to place it under a European guarantee, as Luxembourg is placed. But is that likely to satisfy Germany? No, no; she has suffered too much, lost too much, to let her enemy escape so lightly now she has her upon her knees! Would it satisfy us, if we were next neighbours to France, dwellers in the old Palatinate? I think we should cheer, one and all, for a material barrier of stone walls and the natural glacis of the Vosges mountains in preference to a wilderness of treaties and moral guarantees!

XXXVI.

The Siege of Paris begun.

September 15.

TO-DAY at home is just like yesterday, none but natural changes. The mornings feel autumnal, the woods have a bronze sheen in the hazy sunshine, the fields are cleared of their crops. It is all beautiful, it is all peaceful. And within a few hours' travel of this bright serenity is the be-

ginning of a great ruin that every sensible heart aches for! In the middle of last night I woke up with the impression of the state of France upon me like a bad dream, an unreal, visionary thing that a few clear turns of thought would dissipate. But no! there it remained, a sense of tribulation, remorse, and anguish, past the healing of human charity.

The siege of Paris began two days ago, on Tuesday, the 13th of September. No one can leave or enter the city without a "permit." The Germans have enveloped it on every side, and keep the strictest suspicious watch. The Uhlans have very vague notions of the sanctity of a flag of truce, and after dark one evening they refused a passage through their outposts to a messenger from the British Embassy going to King William's headquarters at Meaux. Great was the consternation upon this; and Lord Lyons has since published a notice in *Galignani* to warn the English who still linger within the walls that they linger at their peril. Within and without fears and dangers multiply. The sale of daggers, sword-sticks, and other such tools to the roughs is very active; beggars swarm; and some clamorous patriots amongst the Reds are leading a cry for the confiscation of the property of those wealthy citizens who have forsaken Paris in her affliction. There is time enough for that yet. It will be confiscated, so far as it can benefit those who remain, if the city be driven to extremity; for such a city besieged, with the winter coming on, is in awful case. The exodus of the

rich has been more than balanced by the crowds of poor and of peasant people flying from the open country to the shelter of the fortifications. Two million souls are shut up in Paris at this moment, when the last wave of the invading flood surges round her walls. There is meat for one month, bread for two with carefulness, and wine for half a year.

"Thus she sinks, as it were, into the depths, and we may soon be straining sight and hearing in vain to catch something of what is passing in the city which but yesterday was the rendezvous of the world."

XXXVII.

One Refugee amongst Many.

September 17.

WHAT a charming place Ryde is in fine September weather! Frances and I went over this afternoon, and in a bracing wind walked along the Strand, where the tide was up, until we came to a bit of rough open ground, where the sea-wall and the pavement end. There were shoals of gay people and children out. A few blast-crippled trees and a great fort and earthwork close the land-view in that direction; but the Solent was alive with shipping, and the opposite coast, with Portsmouth and South-sea for a fringe, was like a picture through the soft haze of smoke, sunshine, and spray.

On the pier, if we had not known it already,

we might have learnt which way the current of popular feeling is setting since the capture of the Emperor and the flight of the Empress have placed France at such a disadvantage for agreeing with her adversary. The band played that favourite German melody, "The Rhine Watch," and the fashionable crowd heard it in solemn silence. When the musicians struck up "The Marseillaise," there was eloquent applause.

His friends must be glad to know how comfortably Napoleon III. is established at Wilhelmsöhe. His palace-prison is delightful, his retinue is large and splendid, and the environs are lovely for his walks and drives, which he enjoys daily. He has no more anxiety, the worst is over for him; and he looks well in health, and seriously composed, improvements which his agreeable seclusion will confirm.

The Empress Eugénie arrived in England a week ago. She had resolved to play over again the part of Marie-Antoinette, she said; but everything was wanting to give her the pathetic dignity that cleaves to the memory of that unfortunate princess; and on the riotous Sunday afternoon, when the revolution broke out in Paris, she was very easily prevailed on to leave her post at the Tuileries. She quitted the city in a hack cab, only one friend, Madame le Bréton, accompanying her, and escorted by Mr. Evans, an American dentist practising in Paris, to whose house she had walked from the palace. It is not probable that she would have been either injured or arrested; but all the precau-

tions of fear were taken, and they travelled for three days and nights into Normandy, in a farmer's market-cart, and on Wednesday evening arrived at Deauville, a little port near the mouth of the Seine, where lately some of the imperialist grandees tried to create a new bathing resort. Here was lying Sir John Burgoyne's yacht, with his wife on board. The Empress appealed to Sir John to carry her over to England; and the next day, in a brisk gale, they crossed the Channel. The weather was so rough and contrary that it was not until Friday afternoon they made Ryde. The Empress landed there, and after a brief rest and refreshment at the Pier Hotel she went to Portsmouth by the steamboat, and forward by the South-Coast railway to Hastings, where she met her son.

There, for the present, is a pause in this lady's great vicissitudes. The splendid valour of Jeanne d'Arc, the noble fortitude of Maria-Theresa's daughter, mocked her imagination with shallow fancies of equal courage in herself. "When duty calls, where danger threatens, you will see me first to defend the flag of France!" was her brave promise to Paris on the Sunday after Wörth. Four little weeks later, on another memorable Sunday, she was a woman in sore distress, in tears, in full flight for England, one trembling refugee amongst ten thousand: nothing more.

Would to God that France, that the mothers of France, had lost no more than she has!

XXXVIII.

The Burning of the Woods.

September 19.

THIS is a lovely season, the air so pure and cool, the sky so sunny and clear. The bracken is already tinged with russet, and the green rides through the woods are strewn with pine cones; but in sheltered hollows the light foliage of the birch-trees, of the oaks and ashes, is scarcely touched. This afternoon the slanting gleams through the red-brown stems of the fir-trees, thrown across the grassy cart-track which winds round the outskirts of the copse above Apse Farm, had a charming effect. We met some strangers there, who had the aspect of foreigners. Three children were of their company: poor little things, they will remember it as the romance of their youth, that they visited England in the days of the great war, when Paris was besieged by the Germans.

Paris is not so isolated but that we have news of her. The telegraph by Havre is yet safe; but the invaders come and come, more and more of them. Thirty thousand who have seen no fighting since Sadowa, splendid troops, nine out of ten of whom wear the medal of that famous victory, have entered France by Sedan. The people everywhere on the line of march towards the capital have done their worst to blow up bridges and tunnels, and encumber the roads with barricades of trees; but

the steady advance of the Germans has not been retarded for a day. They themselves deplore the wanton destruction that has been done. The preparations for the defence in the more immediate neighbourhood of the city are very wild; one must confess that it needs a strong nerve to stay there. Governor Trochu has decreed that all the woods and forests which might cover the approach of the enemy are to be burnt, and inflammable substances strewn in them to make the conflagration sure. The fosses of Paris are also to be filled with fagots, soaked in pitch and petroleum; rather than the Prussians shall have the city, the Reds will make of it a second Sodom.

The dreadful work is already begun. The smell of the burning woods fills the air, and the weird spectacle may be seen from the roofs of the houses. Rain does not quench the flames kindled with petroleum and gas-tar. One night while the forest of Bondy was burning, hundreds of curious sight-seers went up to the cemetery on Montmâitre, to witness the awful scene. "It was fine weather, still and clear; the trees were dry, and the oil and petroleum spilt in the brushwood had no obstacle to contend with. Isolated columns of flame, and clouds of smoke, rose suddenly, and before half an hour were lost in one general blaze, which stood out like a fiery wall against the sky. In the light of this vast furnace, hideous objects were rendered visible on the Martyr's Hill; yawning graves, dug to hold three or four hundred persons, reminded the lookers-on of the impending destruction of

human life. These common ditches, into which men, women, and children, slain in the siege, are to be thrown, intrude into the reserved burial-places of the rich, the respectable, and the dainty. War is no respecter of persons, of sacred spots or holy places. Skulls, fragments of coffins, shreds of black cloth, all the ghastly relics of mortality, mingled with the mounds of clay cast up from the trenches. And a chiffonier, with basket and hooked stick, was there plying his trade. It is the way of Frenchmen to meet the cruel irony of fate with gibes. The women sighed that such things should be at the bidding of princes; but the mocking devil was roused in the men, and they gave him full swing in the face of the blazing forests and the open graves."

A shabby citizen in the crowd, premising that there is no glory in war, suggested that a better hygienic precaution than these trenches would be a good solid peace, how dishonourable soever fools might call it. Unfortunately, shabby citizens have no more weight in the councils of republics than in the councils of kings, and those trenches will be full before the war is over.

XXXIX.

Bismarck declares the Terms.

September 20.

BISMARCK has spoken. He will make no pretence of foregoing the conquests of the German armies. He does not want territory for the sake of enlarged dominion, and he would rather be without French-speaking people; but twenty-five times in the space of one hundred years France, on one pretext or another, has made war on Germany; and now that, by God's help, she is beaten down, she must be made harmless. It is idle to hope to propitiate her. The serpent has cast its skin, but its nature is the same. France will never forgive Sedan, and Germany must be made strong against her next attack; must have Metz, Strasbourg, and an improved frontier. Germany will fight ten years, sooner than not obtain this necessary security.

There is no misunderstanding these hard lines. They are plain and significant enough. Against them the silver-tongued eloquence of Jules Favre pleads in vain. Responsibility is teaching him some severe truths. He no longer demands impunity for France, but still he cannot bear that the same measure should be meted to her as she would have meted to Germany had success crowned her aggression. In a second circular to the European Powers he again repudiates the possibility of any

cession of territory, and strives to lay upon Prussia the onus of a decision between war and peace. He says:—"We have not the pretension to ask disinterestedness of Prussia . . . but to impose unacceptable terms on France would be forcibly to continue the war. . . . France prefers her disasters a thousand times to dishonour. . . . There is not a sincere person in Europe who could affirm that France, freely consulted, made war with Prussia. I do not draw the conclusion from this that we are not responsible: we have been wrong, and are cruelly expiating our having tolerated a government which led us to ruin. . . . But if the power which has so seriously compromised us takes advantage of our misfortunes to overwhelm us, we shall oppose a desperate resistance. . . . Fortune has been hard upon us, but she has unlooked for revulsions, which our determination will call forth. . . . Serious, confident, ready for the utmost sacrifice, the nation in arms will descend into the arena, having before its eyes this simple but great duty—the defence of its homes and independence."

These are the brave words of an advocate who accepts his brief, and does his utmost to clear his client, not concerning himself with the simplicity of the truth. What is the truth? While the advocate exalts the unanimous purpose of France to be free, so many Frenchmen within the age of military service are abandoning their country that an edict is published to stay the emigration.

This is the inexorable logic of facts, of which Bismarck is as well aware as Jules Favre himself.

XL.

The Position reviewed.

September 22.

BISMARCK has set the price of a peace,—a very heavy price. Whether France will pay it or not is remitted to the decision of the future Constituent Assembly; and Bismarck will give Jules Favre a meeting to try if they can arrange an armistice until that decision can be obtained.

This is a moment to review the position.

The principal German cabinets are making preparations for establishing a common government and parliament for all Germany; and German scholars have been sent to France to search the archives of occupied towns for documents bearing on German mediæval history. King William's headquarters are at Ferrières, in the house of Baron Rothschild. "Fritz" and his staff are at Versailles, lodged in the prefecture; and the palace is a hospital for the sick and wounded.

Of the besieged places:—The railway line to Havre was cut on Sunday, and Paris has no communication with the world unless by secret means or by leave of the enemy. The Provisional Government and the foreign ambassadors have removed to Tours. Strasbourg is *in extremis*. The bombardment is very heavy, for General Werder is doing his best to batter and breach the walls, that if the siege come to a storm the sacrifice of life may not be reckless. But he hopes to enforce a capitula-

tion. Metz is not yet so low. Horses and cattle can be seen, with a glass, grazing in the meadows along the river; and tall chimneys, as of factories, are still smoking. But the imprisoned soldiers of Bazaine are pinched for food, and his pickets will often risk a shot for the sake of getting near the enemy to beg a mouthful of bread. Toul and Phalsbourg give vast labour and inconvenience to the invaders by forcing them to keep clear of the main roads of communication between the frontier and their armies before Metz and Paris. The convoys have to march across country, where the free-shooters have the chance of an occasional capture and always the opportunity of harassing and delaying their progress. Colmar and Mulhouse have been peaceably occupied. Laon has surrendered, the governor gave up the citadel to save the town; but a drunken patriot of a gunner blew it up, and friends and foes and himself together. Some of the Paris journalists extol the act.

The condition of the people where the war has passed is very sad. The cattle plague is now afflicting Alsace, and the poor peasants call it "worse than the Prussians." And there is an appeal to England for the houseless and destitute folk about Sedan. If our almsgivers give really of their own to these unfortunates, it is well; but if, to be in the fashion, they merely divert the stream of their charity from the necessitous at home, that is not so well. That is "robbing Peter to pay Paul."

For the temper of the nation,—it is furious

against the Emperor. The imperial papers have fallen into the hands of the Provisional Government, and furnish abundant texts for moral declamation. We are told of a *coup-d'état*, projected by the Empress, Palikao, and Pietri, the chief of police, for getting rid of the republican members of the Legislative Body on the 4th of September. We are told also that Macmahon undertook his disastrous march to relieve Bazaine by order of the council in Paris, to whom every day the Emperor telegraphed *his* orders. If this be true, and it is generally believed, then was "the worst general in Europe the author of the greatest military catastrophe on record." But that which excites the fiercest contempt and resentment is the excuse he made for himself to Bismarck and King William at the capitulation. *The Union*, hitherto a moderate print, thus criticises his conduct:—"This adventurer, this bloody man of December 2, whose first intimation of war to the Legislative Chamber was an ultimatum, in order to get himself well treated, has the impudence to tell his conqueror that he was innocent of any desire for war, and that the French people is the guilty party. This sole author of the calamities that overwhelm us now separates his cause from that of the nation, seeks to shirk his constitutional responsibility, and throws upon us the vast weight of his own blunders. Nothing like this was ever seen in the history of our poor France, which was once *glorious* France. Other sovereigns have miscalculated their forces in war, other sovereigns have been vanquished; but to tell such

lies as Napoleon III. does, to escape punishment, after having brought his country to ruin, is rare baseness and unprecedented cowardice."

These being the popular sentiments of the hour, it may be imagined what indignant alarm, what distraction and wrath, have arisen to confound the rumour that King William and Bismarck, who hate and fear republicanism, propose to restore the Emperor, and bring him back to Paris.

Events will not pause while Bismarck and Jules Favre are debating peace or no peace, armistice or no armistice. Every hour has its mark. Sèvres has asked for a Prussian garrison to protect its china factory, and has received one. Havre and Cherbourg are preparing for their defence; and Rouen, that ancient and famous city, for a philosophic surrender. The rich fields and pastures of Normandy are bare of cattle and sheep: swept, some into Paris to feed the besieged; swept, more out of the way of German foragers. The blockade in the Baltic is raised; and the French fleet, which sailed under the benediction of the Empress, is cruising inglorious off Calais and Dunkirk. Cities of the south, that have not yet seen the Uhlans, talk very big of what France must do to be saved; but the courage of so many unwilling soldiers is proving of Bob Acres' quality, that Governor Trochu finds it necessary to establish a permanent court-martial for the discouragement of those who run away. Last Tuesday General Vinoy led a sortie out of Paris towards Sceaux. His Zouaves would not fight at all: hundreds of them, rather than

cross an open space exposed to the enemy's fire, threw down their arms, and gave themselves up. This manœuvre the Germans do not admire, they have already more prisoners than they know what to do with. The mobiles did not behave much better, and indeed fear is catching. The end of the sortie was a defeat for Vinoy, with the loss of a valuable position at Châtillon, of seven guns, and 2000 men.

All these things are against France, against the advocate of France, to whose mission we nevertheless wish good speed.

XLI.

The Interview at Ferrières.

September 26.

NEITHER a peace nor an armistice!

But here is the sum of what passed at the interview between Bismarck and Jules Favre, as reported by themselves.

They met in the *salon* of a house where lay all manner of rubbish, left behind by the owners when they made up their baggage in haste and terror to flee from the invasion of the Germans.

Jules Favre began by saying that the war was born of the will of one man: France, become her own mistress, desired to end it, but would not end it on conditions which would make of the peace only a short and menacing truce.

Bismarck replied that if a durable peace were possible he would sign it at once. He knew the

opposition had condemned the war, but the power representing the opposition was precarious. If Paris was not taken in a few days the populace would upset the Provisional Government.

To this Jules Favre rejoined: "We have no populace in Paris, but an intelligent and devoted population, who will not play into the enemy's hands; and the Government will resign its power to the Constituent Assembly which it has convoked."

Bismarck answered: "That assembly will have designs we cannot foresee. But if it obey the French sentiment it will have war. You will no more forget the capitulation of Sedan than Waterloo, or Sadowa which did not concern you. Since Louis XIV. to this day the tendencies of France have undergone no change; it is the long resolution of France to attack Germany, and seize her territory."

Jules Favre maintained his own opinions, and pressed for possible conditions of peace. Bismarck said that they should be obliged, for their security, to keep the territory they had taken.

"Strasbourg is the key of the house!" remonstrated Jules Favre.

"Of *our* house," rejoined Bismarck; "we ought to have it." Jules Favre entreated him to be more explicit. "It is useless," Bismarck said; "we shall not agree. It is a matter to settle later." But being urged further, he stated with grave deliberation that the departments of the Upper and Lower Rhine, and part of that of the Moselle, with Metz, Château-Salins, and Soissons, were indispensable,

and he could not renounce them. Jules Favre said that the people would resist such annexation.

"Yes," Bismarck agreed: "I know they will be a rough handful, yet we cannot but take them. We shall, I am sure, soon have another war with you, and we mean to start with all our advantages in possession."

Jules Favre cried out upon such solutions—Europe might interfere. "We may perish as a nation, but not with dishonour. It is clear you wish to destroy France!"

Bismarck protested against this deduction, but still stood firm upon the necessity of a material guarantee. Jules Favre asked that the assembly might have time given to meet and decide the matter. Bismarck rejoined peremptorily that this would need an armistice, which he would not grant; an armistice was always bad for victorious troops.

At this point the conversation was adjourned till the next day.

In the interim Bismarck had reconsidered his refusal of an armistice, and when he met the disheartened advocate of France in the morning he brought with him a sheet of paper on which were set forth in large German text the conditions for a truce:—The surrender of Strasbourg, Toul, and Phalsbourg, to free the German communications with the frontier, and if the Assembly met in Paris Mont Valérien or some other fort commanding the city.

At the mention of Mont Valérien, Jules Favre

exclaimed: "As well ask for Paris itself! How can a French Assembly deliberate under your guns?"

"Let us seek another combination," said Bismarck, and suggested that if the Assembly met at Tours no guarantee need be exacted from Paris, but she must remain enclosed. He added that the surrender of Strasbourg was but an affair of time, and the garrison must be prisoners of war.

"You forget that you speak to a Frenchman!" cried Jules Favre with uncontrollable indignation. "To sacrifice that brave garrison would be a cowardly act!"

Bismarck disclaimed any wish to wound him, but these were the laws of war. However, if the King pleased, this article might be modified; and he withdrew to consult the King.

The King did not please. He would accept the arrangement for the meeting of the Assembly at Tours, but the Strasbourg garrison he must have.

Jules Favre was moved even to tears. He knew that such severe conditions would not be consented to. He thanked Bismarck for his courtesy, and the interview closed. When the terms were reported to the Provisional Government, they were rejected without discussion. And a proclamation was issued at Tours, of which this is the pith.

"Before the investment of Paris M. Jules Favre wished to have an interview with Count Bismarck, in order to ascertain the disposition of Prussia. The following is the declaration of the enemy:—Prussia desires to continue the war so as to reduce France to the rank of a second-rate power; Prussia

wants Alsace, and Lorraine as far as Metz, by right of conquest, and to consent to an armistice she dares to ask the surrender of Strasbourg, Toul, Phalsbourg, and Mont Valérien! The inhabitants of Paris, in their exasperation, would rather bury themselves in the ruins of their city than accept such terms. To such impudent pretensions we can only reply by fighting to the bitter end. France accepts the contest, and relies upon all her children."

The bitter end! When we consider how many of the children of France are turning their backs upon her, and what faint hearts to fight have many more, we fear a bitter end indeed!

XLII.

Nothing New under the Sun.

THIS German Empire that is rebuilding will be cemented with the blood and tears of men, like all the old empires that have risen and fallen since the days of chaos! One hears through Bismarck's voice, as he answers the pleading for France, the echo of that ambition which has ever inspired the rulers of the world to make their strength the law of justice.

Germany has won a golden reputation for her patriotic sacrifices, for the valour of her soldiers, and their moderation in success; indeed, they have dealt gently with the quiet people hitherto. And will King William and his counsellors tarnish their nobility, by a greedy clutching of the spoil? Mighty

enough to be merciful, rich enough in honour to despise all fear, will they stoop to mutilate a foe that is down? France has been very guilty towards them; hatred and revenge writhe adder-like in her sore heart; but she is so low, they are so uplifted, that they should dare to disregard her hissing.

As Strasbourg was got from Germany by fraud, so let it go by force, and who will impeach that reversion? But Metz is as the very pound of flesh, nearest her heart, that Shylock asked for! A paraphrase—

“Bismarck, the world thinks, and I think so too,
That thou but ledest this fashion of thy malice
To the last hour of act; and then, 'tis thought
Thou'lt show thy mercy and remorse, more strange
Than is thy strange apparent cruelty:
And when thou now exactest the penalty,
Thou wilt not only lose the forfeiture,
But, touched with human gentleness and love,
Forgive a moiety of the principal;
Glancing an eye of pity on her losses,
That have of late so huddled on her back,
Enough to pluck commiseration of her state
From brassy bosoms, and rough hearts of flint,
From stubborn Turks and Tartars, never trained
To offices of tender courtesy.
We all expect a gentle answer, Count.”

Bismarck is not bound to please us with his answer. “What, wouldst thou have a serpent sting thee twice?” he cries. “The pound of flesh, which I demand of France, is dearly bought; 'tis mine, and I will have it!”

Shylock had a place of repentance left him; so

yet have Bismarck and his master. Let us still hope that,

“Though justice be their plea, they will consider this,
That in the course of justice none of us
Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy,
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy.”

XLIII.

The Old Order Changeth.

WHILE we have been watching for Paris, behold, Rome is taken. Rome! The troops of excommunicated King Victor Emmanuel are in Rome; and the Pope's Zouaves, those Catholic soldiers of all nationalities whom piety had rallied to his defence, are beaten, broken up, discharged of their duty, and sent home. So falls the most ancient sovereignty of Christendom. The loss of the temporal power is the rejoinder of fate to the assumption of infallibility.

But Pope Pius does not accept the decree of fate. King Victor Emmanuel offers him liberal terms, but he will none of them. His spiritual power is left him in all its plenitude; his income and the incomes of his cardinals and officials are not curtailed, the ecclesiastical institutions of Rome and the clergy in all Italy are freed from government supervision, the immunities of his envoys are not touched, and his supremacy in the Leonine portion of Rome—that portion lying between the Tiber and the city walls, and enclosing the

Church of St. Peter, the Vatican, the Castle of St. Angelo, and the Hospital of Santo Spirito—is recognised and allowed. But all is not enough. Pope Pius will have no truce with robbers and traitors; and here is the opening of a new great chapter in history that has yet to be lived.

In a collection of letters I lately read, which passed between two ladies of rank and cultivation during the wars and rumours of wars that disquieted England in the middle of the last century, little sympathy or interest is expressed for the sufferings of humanity because of such wars. Indeed it is stated for a moral truth that those who live at home at peace ought not to afflict themselves for these remote sorrows. Perhaps we run into the other extreme, and make them too much our own.

This afternoon there was another sewing-party at the parsonage for the sick and wounded; for the patching of quilts, the design of which comprises texts of Scripture, some French, some German, worked in black chain-stitch on self-coloured or white squares, filled in and bordered with bright bits of chintz and printed calico. They take a world of making, but the little girls who come to help are mightily pleased, and the feeling of young and old is alike in this, that the poor soldiers in hospital must believe that the English pity them when they take such pains to make them quilts; for our own village is but one amongst many where women have set themselves to this labour

of love. As the quilts are to be lined with red flannel, and the texts are kindly chosen, we may indulge the hope that they will be altogether comfortable.

What a blessing that on works of charity Christians agree! for how foolishly some seem to talk when they are not of our opinion. There was the old lady at the sewing-party again, who finds a sufficient reason in "Mariolatry" for all the woes that are desolating France. This pious conceit was elicited a second time by a pathetic little picture of poor souls praying in the Church of Notre-Dame-des-Victoires in Paris, which is open day and night since the siege, that soldiers going on duty, and others, may snatch a minute aside with God in these awful troubles. By the sword that pierced her own heart, they plead for the intercession of the Blessed Mary with her Holy Son, and go away comforted; and this our puritans call "idolatry" and "wretched woman worship," for which cause God has given the whole nation over to the retribution of a dreadful war. They who suffer do not believe that God's wrath is upon them because of their religion, imperfect though it may be. One of their own bishops says the judgment has come because almost all the people have forgotten how to speak the truth; because they have run riot in luxury, corruption, and self-deceit, and have let their courage waste in idle submission to an enervating tyranny. Nations, like individuals, reap as they sow. Heaven works no more miracles of deliverance, but neither does Heaven work by riddles, leaving its meaning

to be guessed. There are numerous moral and political explanations of the ruin of France, without charging it upon the humble and devout hearts who feel that the intercession of saints and the fervent prayers of holy men still avail much with the great and terrible God under whose chastising hand they bow.

When the causes and consequences of the decay of France come to be summed up, she will be found to have lost in vital force and character for the reasons that the Bishop of Orleans renders, not because of her too superstitious piety. That is her very salt of preservation! From an intercepted letter of a French officer to a friend, which has been made public by the Germans, we learn something of the soldiers, her proudest vaunt; learn how soon they were demoralised by their initiatory defeats, how they were starved, neglected, and finally lost by the incompetence of their officers who, before the capitulation of Sedan, had got the length of stealing from one another. The African troops, the writer says, are an ulcer in the service. Then the journalists, the guides of national sentiment, are not ashamed to advise that peace be made at any price, the captured armies brought home, and reorganised for a war of extermination. This is the blustering folly that Bismarck professes he must take bail for in Alsace and Lorraine. Even the men who have charged themselves with the government of the country, and the expulsion of the invaders, are working for the promotion of a false

confidence which, ten to one, will recoil upon them eventually in universal distrust. Gambetta and Jules Favre stay in Paris with Governor Trochu, and their dispatches fly by balloon to Tours. Necessity is the mother of invention! The balloon-post may safely carry bubble-dispatches. If any rumour be spread in the provinces of disturbance in the capital, the men at Tours are energetically to deny it. The world must believe that Trochu has an immense force in the National Guard, the Mobiles, and the regular troops, with provisions and munitions in abundance. The theatres are closed, the cafés shut at ten o'clock. All is quiet, all are in good hope. And Paris promises to hold out through the winter, if France will make an effort to keep herself.

Perhaps the gentlemen of the pavement have faith in what they say; but for an illustration of their good hope and their immense force in soldiers, we have from another quarter a glimpse of one of the saddest, most pitiful scenes that ever Paris saw. A file of men with coats reversed, arms bound, countenances pale, dejected, scared at the cruel taunts, the cruel mockings that pursue them. These are the poor cowards of Châtillon going to be shot, the passers-by are told. And as if the bitterness of death were not enough, a placard is carried before them with this inscription: "It is permitted to spit in their faces."

And some of the Paris fungus-breed have done it!

Here the old order changeth not. The Red

Spectre has its hounds ready, and only waits opportunity to let them slip.

XLIV.

Two more Pawns Lost.

September 30.

TOUL has fallen, and Strasbourg has fallen. So the French have lost already the chief pawns asked for an armistice, and they have no armistice.

Toul gave up without bombardment. The garrison was not strong enough for an obstinate defence.

Strasbourg capitulated on the same terms as Sedan. Seventeen thousand men and 500 officers laid down their arms. The mobiles have been dismissed to their homes, but the soldiers of the line go prisoners into Germany. Their destination is Rastadt, and their march out of the citadel was without credit or dignity. Many were riotously drunk; some broke their guns, others tossed them into the moat. A large proportion of these men were the disbanded fugitives who escaped the pursuit after Wörth, and found shelter in Strasbourg just before it was invested. Wherever they have gone they have carried disorder.

The capitulation was with consent of the inhabitants. The walls were breached, and General Werder had determined on a storm. The sick-bearers were sent for from Frankfort, and all was ready, when the white flag was seen floating from

the tower of the cathedral. General Uhrich had called a council of war, to which came the chief citizens, and being told that it was impossible to save the city, they agreed unanimously on a surrender. It was the anniversary of the day, one hundred and eighty-nine years before, when Louis XIV., in a time of full peace, got possession of it by fraud and treachery, with force in reserve to maintain his lawless capture.

Strasbourg reverts to Germany grievously impoverished. The cathedral has not suffered beyond repair, but the Dominican Church, the Protestant house of worship, is in ruins, and the city-library, which was established in the choir, has been destroyed by fire. The pictures in the public collection have also perished as completely as the books and manuscripts of the library. There are acres of houses in chaos, and the once beautiful Botanical Gardens are a wilderness, traversed by two broad, deep trenches, filled with coffins of the soldiers and citizens who have died in the siege: some twelve hundred in all.

Soissons is now invested, that very French and ancient city, a fortress of the first rank, and only sixty-five miles from Paris northwards. Clermont-sur-Oise has been occupied; and twice again, to be twice defeated, has Bazaine fought to break away from Metz. The enemy have discovered and cut the telegraph wires laid in the bed of the Seine, by which Paris kept open her communication with Rouen; and so the work of war and destruction

goes on. The German soldiers would be glad to have done with it, and to go home for Christmas. From the heights that they hold round the capital, they can see the towers of Notre-Dame, the gilded dome of the Invalides, and the myriad windows glittering in the sun. All the world prays for no bombardment of the seductive city; but the Prussians scoff at the plea for indulgence, and vow they will not spare her more than another when their guns come up, if she has not yielded before.

There can be no peace until she does yield. Bismarck anticipates an early conclusion, and does not press the siege. "Let her seethe in her own humours," he says, and expects, apparently, that strifes and divisions will arise within, and speed her fall.

They may. But as this war has furnished so many proofs that nothing is certain but the unforeseen, perhaps Paris may astonish the nations by the length and tenacity of her defence. There is also another chance, though not a very probable one, that the enemy may be compelled to raise the siege.

XLV.

A Bit of Prose.

October 1.

PARIS keeps her fêtes in the midst of her dangers, and laughs while the chemists are busy devising substitutes for the old Greek fire, while the engineers are undermining her, laying down torpedoes and

other explosive perils, some to blow up the enemy, some to burn and suffocate him. The powers that be are evidently prepared to stick at nothing for the defence of the city. I do not think their ingenious collection of infernal machines will keep the Prussians out; but they will instruct the wild mob of new mischief; and if they run into frenzy, as the Paris wild mob is prone to do, there is a great deal too much catch-fire about to be safe or pleasant. When the guillotine was proposed to the Revolutionary Government of 1792, as a swift and easy instrument of execution, some cautious person objected to it, that it would familiarise the people with blood. The present men seem to be blind to the evil of familiarising the people with fire.

"Whom the gods mean to destroy, they first drive mad."

By fits and starts I incline to think that a national dementia is creeping over France.

Sensation soon jades. Who will write an epic for the glorification of the prose of life? It is an intense relief to throw down the papers, and get away into the woods and fields.

There has been a wonderful commotion every morning lately amongst the swallows, as if they were consulting about their migration to the genial south; and the robins have begun to sing very sweetly, as their wont is in the fall of the leaf. The foliage is perceptibly thinner in exposed spots. This afternoon we observed a great ash-tree, quite

shrivelled and brown on the side towards the north, as if scorched by a blast of flame. The night-frosts are sharp, and in Scotland there has been snow. The weatherwise tell us that there is every foresign of a severe winter; acorns are as profuse as leaves on the oak-trees, and all other wild fruits and berries are abundant.

Yes, winter is at hand; but to-day was like a day lost out of June, so warm in the sun that we were thankful to turn aside from the open field-path into the deep green hollow by Apse, which is shady of an afternoon on the left side of the brook, and the fine turf always cool and soft under foot. From the hollow we sauntered into the fir-copse, and pursued the cart-track towards the farm, where I tried to convince Frances, by ocular demonstration, that a red tiled roof, weather-stained, and tinted with golden lichens, is far superior for picturesqueness to a clean slated roof. Next, beguiled by sunny glimpses through the bracken, we diverged into less beaten ways, and saw again pretty secluded nooks of wild wood that we have known ever since we first took our rambles here.

But now something happened that may stop our rambles.

We were gazing out to the sea from a knoll high up in the copse, when we became aware of a man with a gun in the turnip field below; a very tall man, razor-like for slenderness, defined against the clear amber of the setting sun, and, too plainly, with an evil eye upon ourselves.

Nothing like this had ever befallen us before. The apparition looked us out of the wood!

We tried to keep on our way leisurely; felt defiant, and yet quaked. We knew we had to go. The man with the gun kept on a line with us, at an observant distance. Once we lost him to view for a moment; the next, there he was, leaning over a gate, much nearer, and his dogs at his heels. Why were they setting us? Because partridges were scarce?

Frances stooped to gather a purple sprig of heather. I diverged to the dimple in the hill-side, where the lady-fern once grew luxuriantly, and behold it was destroyed, ploughed up as if potatoes had been there! And the man came through the gate, and advanced a menacing step towards us. As we moved on, he halted again. Frances awfully suggested that we were *trespassers* — trespassers where we had been at home any fine day for a dozen years!

But Frances was right. When we came to the place where the old five-barred gate used to be (a nothing for stopping the road) there was an abominable new hurdle, tightly fixed across the gap, and, rearing its insolent head above the hedge, a freshly painted board, threatening us with the utmost rigours of the law!

XLVI.

Conscripts.

October 3.

THE official art of lying has not gone out with the empire. Here is a traveller's tale of a placard that he read posted up at Valenciennes: "Versailles retaken. The Prussian army routed. Many parks of artillery captured. 6000 prisoners at Mont Valérien. 30,000 Prussians *hors-de-combat*. 67 mitrailleuses taken. The Prussian staff captured. GAMBETTA."

The facts are all the other way. The French made a sortie last Friday against the Germans in their entrenchments, and were driven back in such wild confusion that General Trochu has been obliged again to remind his soldiers of two stringent articles of war: Death to him who deserts his post before the enemy; death to him who refuses to obey when ordered to march towards the enemy. Poor souls, they have seen enough of death! Every way it is death to them, and without glory. From Mâcon the young mobiles went crying and lamenting; and those who were too much of men to cry chanted a dreary rhyme, with a drearier refrain.

"Nous partons,
Ton, ton,
Comme des moutons,
Pour la boucherie,
Pour la boucherie.

Nous aimons
Pourtant la vie;
Mais nous partons,
Ton, ton,
Pour la bouchérie.

On nous massacrera,
Ra, ra,
Comme des rats,
Comme des rats,
Ah! que Bismarck rira!"

Bismarck does not laugh. He says it is a pity, this driving of young, unwilling, undisciplined men to the slaughter.

Once I saw a muster of conscripts. But that was in time of peace, when I was in Normandy with Frances four years ago. We heard the complaint of a pretty *bonne* in the house where we were lodged, who was bewailing her loss by the last draft of young men from her *pays*, her favourite brother and her sweetheart being amongst them. For some three months they had been left at home; and the day of grace over, they were now assembling in Caen, previous to being sent off to the various military dépôts for conversion into soldiers. We travelled up to Paris by night, the weather being extremely hot, and in the train were two hundred of these Norman conscripts, most of them primed with drink, elated and noisy, but not unruly. They kept up their riot all through the darkness, but when we reached Paris their song was done, and they tumbled out of the trucks in the morning light, a dismal crew. There was one amongst them,

yellow-visaged, lean, by the head and shoulders taller than the rest, with long attenuated fingers, and clothing of the rustiest black. From what peaceful, poor study of art, or science, or ideas had the conscription torn *him*? He was a picture of misery undissembled. *He* had not sung his way up to Paris! His rueful countenance, his hapless, helpless resignation to inexorable fate were a tragedy.

The cowards of Châtillon going to be shot, and the conscripts of Macon going to fight with tears in their eyes, are a sorry spectacle, if we gaze without thinking. If we reflect, we shall see that it is mainly discipline and use which make the difference between the poltroon and the bravest of the brave.

I remember a grand old soldier who was not afraid to confess that, the first time he heard the cannon fire in battle, he burst into an hysterical passion of tears. And yet, a few months later, he was one of those who volunteered for the forlorn-hope at the siege of St. Sebastian, and was the first in the breach.

Is not courage, in its finest strain, that disciplined part in a man which makes him fully sensible of his risk, but keeps his nerves steady?

It is an every-day virtue. Not a newspaper we read but has some instance of it in the execution of duty. It is this pure courage mans life-boats, fire-escapes, and all other services of danger and self-devotion. It was this pure courage hurled our

Six Hundred into the valley of death, though every soul of them must have known that some one had blundered. It was this pure courage that braced the ranks on the deck of the *Birkenhead*, and when all hope of life was lost broke out in a ringing cheer as the ship went down. It was this pure courage stood fast all day with the British at Waterloo, and with the Prussians at Mars-la-Tour. It was this pure courage flung the French Cuirassiers amongst the vineyards of Wörth, to save a rag of honour for their beaten army, and to convince the world that, with fate against them, they still knew how to die.

And pluck, that English word for an English instinct almost as universal in its distribution as any of the five senses, I take to be the native quality that is educated into this finest strain of courage.

There is scarcely a boy without it. One morning, not long ago, a mainstay of our village society—the butcher's boy—suddenly departed with two comrades, leaving us totally in the lurch for dinner. They had started off to enlist for soldiers. The butcher's boy, a tall, slim lad of sixteen, returned after a brief absence, and resumed his tray—he was not old enough for the service yet; but his two comrades had been welcome recruits for the Royal Artillery. They were bred amongst horses, and were big and stout. His only fault will cure, and then he will try again. Meantime, he plays upon a harmless flute, in too frequent pauses of duty. I have seen him, the centre of a select audience, all

resting their baskets, under the elm-trees at my neighbour's gate, while cook, no doubt, was watching wistfully for their delivery.

And smaller boys than these, much smaller, are as full of pluck as they will hold. That great roller, in the cricket-field opposite, was a serious disquiet to me while it was a novelty. When the cricketers are away, a troop of infants come and harness themselves to it, and pull and pull with all their might, and others push behind with all their vengeance. In an agony lest they should some day get power enough in front to move it, then let it slip and crush the rear force, I went out one evening to represent the danger in adequate language. They listened, and when I ceased, at a glance from the leader, the gang in front set their necks to the collar, and those behind put their shoulder to the wheel, as if honour were at stake in presence of the enemy! I retired, happy in the certainty that they could no more stir it than I could stir Sibden Hill.

Another night a tired old horse was ridden into the field by one of these babes, with several others in brisk attendance. They would have a ride all round. The exercise went on prosperously for some time; then the rider in possession rolled off; his minute legs were not long enough to cross Dobbin's broad back. He fell. How glad I was to hear a squall as he touched the ground! When I reached the scene of disaster, the horse was trotting away, and the other boys were scolding the tumbler. That child, feeling himself tenderly behind, and

II*

with his eyes swimming, faced me down that he was not hurt; then limped off, reiterating the fib, with the succouring hand withdrawn.

No fear for England while her mites of boys work so vigorously at play, and if they have a fall, get up again, and grin and bear it!

XLVII.

A Remonstrance.

October 4.

THE monotony of sorrow in this war is inexpressibly saddening. We watch in vain for any touch above humanity. The splendid valour and patriotism of the Germans kindle our imagination no more. Their valour is matched against an antagonist wounded, and weak for loss of blood. Their love of country is overshadowed by the lust of conquest.

The chill, autumnal days are stealing upon us. The sun glows red through the evening haze; the rich, soft depths of colour in copse and hedgerow are beautiful to see through the window, with a handful of crisp, dry fir-chips, glancing and glinting in tiny fragrant jets of flame upon the hearth. But these changes, pleasant, welcome, by the first fire of the season, make one think of the campaign that is lengthening towards winter with a heartache.

Night-watches in cold and frost, night surprises, a perpetual alert, a perpetual danger, that is what it means. There is fighting daily with little purpose and less result—near Fontainebleau, before Metz,

before Soissons, about Epéron; and the brave Emperor, well out of the *mêlée*, takes his rides and walks round Wilhelmshöhe, inspects new inventions of German artillery, has company to dinner, and deems himself with a complacent resignation. He is unable to realise the anguish and shame of France, and for his own iniquities he is quite case-hardened. His rivals in Paris have begun the publication of his private papers. Nowadays a sovereign need not die, for history to tell the truth. Napoleon's errors are not forbidden game. He shares the common lot, and hears what men think of him while he still lives.

King William may hear it too, if he be pleased to incline an ear to voices that do not flatter. His victories have filled the post-horns of all Europe long enough. We want to hear now that he has moderation and magnanimity; that he has wisdom to forbear and forbid such deeds of cruelty and retaliation as will eat into his sword like rust.

Success does not breed compassion amongst soldiers. To say that the German armies are ruled with a rare discipline, that they conduct themselves with vast condescension, for invaders, is a mitigation of horrors in theory; but in practice what does it now amount to? To burn, to slay, to pillage for mere wantonness is not charged against them; but what they call *necessity* puts them upon doing all these things, as they plead, for the prevention of still worse extremities. What worse extremities could be under their martial law than those we begin to witness? They strike with a heavy hand, [trample

with a heavy foot, domineer with a relentless strength. Unhappy rustics, who know nothing but that they are enemies who waste their fields and plunder their substance, rise up in sudden rage, and snatch a revenge here and a revenge there, acts of desperate courage; for which comes a troop, and destroys them, and burns their village; and for their sake, hundreds—old men, women, children, innocent and harmless folk—are cast destitute upon the world, and winter coming. And for all reason: Such is the law of war.

The law of war is not immutable. It has added to its code a bye-law that neutralises the helpers of the wounded; and this is proving a mercy. It might well add another. If the spirit of a nation be not utterly broken when its armies are beaten out of the field, the valour of every man who strikes a blow for the deliverance of his country should be badge enough to ensure him the privileges of a soldier. It is held by some that, under no circumstances, should the civil population meddle with fighting; but a few hot-bloods there will ever be in a land invaded to resist subjugation. And events have reached that pass in France, when war becomes massacre if the conquerors strain every right that might has won them. Nearly a third of the country is overrun by the Germans. Through extensive districts the autumn sowing has not been done, and the people have the weary hunted look of a scattered flock with a mastiff panting at their heels. Civilisation boasts itself of doing wonders; but, if I were a peasant of this new warlike era, I should

pray for a resuscitation of the mediæval Truces of God, when the plough was a sanctuary, and kings and barons might revel in slaughter no more days o' the week than Holy Church allowed, on peril of long purgatory for their own precious souls!

Half-couraged men may be cruel, but the Germans are brave enough to enjoy the luxury of being merciful. Grievs too many are accumulating on their path by inevitable means. For their own honour they ought not to multiply them by gratuitous severities. Military executions of captive free-shots are threatened in German cities. If these take place after leisure to review the mischances that have put arms into their hands, it will be a disastrous scandal. But I do not believe them possible. These irregulars come under a very different category from the wretches who prowl on battle-fields, to pillage the dead, and finish the wounded. For them pity has no plea, and justice no mercy.

XLVIII.

A Tale of a Plot.

October 7.

THE Empress Eugénie and her son have taken up their residence at Chiselhurst, in the picturesque old house on the Common, where once lived Camden, the historiographer. The Empress keeps herself becomingly private, goes to London seldom, and receives few visitors; but of these few some have given rise to much rumour, and the latest, General Bourbaki, to a whole tale of a plot.

General Bourbaki must have had leave of the Germans to come out of Metz, and therefore he is supposed to have been the messenger of Bismarck. The story omits no detail of his meeting with the Empress. She received him with warm cordiality, and then proceeded to say that she wished him to take charge of the Prince Imperial, to conduct him to Metz, and let him remain with Marshal Bazaine's army until the time came for arranging a peace on the basis of the cession of Alsace and Lorraine, the abdication of the Emperor, and the restoration of the dynasty in the person of Napoleon IV., with herself for Regent. General Bourbaki was thunderstruck at this proposal. He expostulated mildly for some time, endeavouring in vain to make the Empress understand the realities of things; but when he found her illusions ineradicable, he bluntly refused the mission she sought to impose on him, and told her plainly that no French army would tolerate the presence of the son of Napoleon III. The Empress burst into tears. Bourbaki went back to France, and reported himself to the Government at Tours, whence comes this legend.

General Boyer also has been at Chiselhurst; and though nothing has transpired that it would be safe to give implicit credence to, we may conjecture that as peace was expected in Germany to crown the capitulation of Sedan, Bismarck has urged it on the Empress by more than one envoy. If she had been strong in the love of France, or even if she had possessed the courage of her command, it is impossible to doubt that peace might have been had

on much easier terms than Bismarck chose to offer to the gentlemen of the pavement, whom he treats as no statesmen. Some territorial' forfeiture France must needs pay. Southern Germany has a right to expect that she shall be made secure against the retaliatory aggressions of her neighbour; and to relinquish Strasbourg and the line of the Vosges mountains, most legitimate spoil of conquest, would be nothing less than a crime against her.

Still there is gossip of Bonapartist intrigues in Belgium, and still it is said that King William would be glad to see the Emperor back in his old place in Paris. Why he should wish to restore that enfeebled sovereign, who pleads in extenuation of the war that he cannot govern his headstrong subjects against their will, is not easy to understand. Probably the desire attributed to King William is a myth, and he has no wish in the matter but for a sound, substantial, lasting peace, which shall satisfy the tribes of the Fatherland, and make them what amends in honour and glory can be made for the loss of many thousands of valiant sons.

What this loss may grow to if the war go on through the winter, humanity shudders to think of!

XLIX.

A Fête Day at Versailles.

October 9.

KING WILLIAM has removed his head-quarters from Ferrières to Versailles, and the day of his arrival was celebrated as fêtes are at Versailles, with a display of the beautiful fountains.

The French were free of the gardens, and they came in crowds, men, women, and children of every class,—unwashed labourers, elegant ladies, ragged street urchins. With them mingled peasants of the commissariat trains, soldiers off duty, convalescents out of hospital, Geneva doctors, officers of every branch of the service, and the staffs of the King and the Crown Prince. It might have been carnival time for the motley pomp and show, but the silence of the multitudes proved it no true merry-making. They were self-respecting enough to behave quietly; and though curious and impatient to see the King, they paid him no honour. The sun was shining resplendently upon the terrace when he appeared at the top of the steps above the grand avenue, and at a given signal the great waters burst into showers and clouds of spray.

This will be a famous scene in history—King William's entry into Versailles, a triumphant conqueror, in the presence of all the glories of France. But I have no heart to expatiate upon it. I am greatly concerned lest the Germans do too much for their honour. The misery and brutalising effects

of the war grow so wide-spreading, that no clamour of victory, no pride of pageantry, can drown or cover them.

The chief figures in the scene are nearly all old men, and must vanish soon from the stage they fill. Here is a slight sketch of them, after their photographs.

The King first. He appears as a pleasant looking, hale old squire in the uniform of a general officer, with a broad red collar to his coat, and a broad red band to his flat cap. Bismarck next: the man of blood and iron, as he is called. He is of large and powerful build, in undress cuirassier uniform, with white cap and yellow facings; his face is massive, and full of sober energy; his eyes are searching, and brows bushy; his nose is blunt, his moustache thick, his chin square and solid. Von Moltke is tall and lean, with a smooth shaven visage, traced all over with small, fine lines; his features are clear cut; his eyes of a piercing, restless vivacity, his mouth close and firm. Bismarck laughs much and joyously, but von Moltke is never seen to smile. Von Roon, the third of this famous triumvirate, best ministers ever king had, has a thoughtful grave air: and well he may; the success of his sovereign has cost him two noble sons.

For secondary personages there is Prince Charles, the King's brother, and Prince Adalbert, a rough weather-beaten sailor, and General von Blumenthal, chief of the Crown Prince's staff, and "Fritz" himself, well tanned with the sun; and the handsome, yellow-bearded Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern, "the

fair pretext of the war," and Dukes and Princes of Coburg, Mecklenburg, Weimar, Würtemberg, Augustenburg,—a gorgeous selection of Royal and Serene Highnesses.

And how very much astonished they must be to see themselves there!

L.

Shadows Before.

October 10.

BAZAINE must have made his last effort. It was on a grand scale; he led the sortie himself, and the Imperial Guard were foremost in it. Yet was not a step gained. The Germans were taken at some disadvantage by the force and suddenness of their attack; for of three landwehr regiments that stood like a wall until the arrival of reinforcements, one was exterminated.

Oh, the hearts at home that will break for those brave men!

This was the battle of Maizières.

There are numerous significant signs that Metz draws towards its fall. The French commanders use their troops with a difference. Amongst the dead on the field of Maizières, the men of the Imperial Guard had all a ration of bacon and biscuit, the other men had nothing. It is cruel work! Starving deserters come out by scores, and beg on their knees to be received as prisoners; and the pickets wink at the poor of the city stealing into the fields, to dig a few roots or potatoes.

A letter by balloon-post has been received at Manchester by a lady whose husband was swept into Metz in the general flight before the advance of the Prussians. The writer says that he shall never again call anything in the way of food common or unclean; for he has just made a thankful, dainty breakfast of donkey's liver.

True to their character, the poor besieged try to be gay as French folks are proverbially, even under gloomy circumstances. When the air is still, the Germans in their entrenchments can hear the military bands playing lively music in the doomed city. Still faithful is Cowper's idyllic picture of the Frenchman, easy, debonair, and brisk; give him his lass, his fiddle, and his frisk, he's always happy, and laughs the sense of misery away.

LI.

Gambetta Prophecies Smooth Things.

October 11.

IN spite of her fêtes Paris is dull as a ship at sea, bound on a long voyage. She sends out the post by balloon, but receives no letters back. We hear of her, but she hears nothing of the world beyond her walls. The windows of her palaces are darkened. The contents of libraries, picture-galleries, museums, are stowed away in vaults and cellars for security against fire when the bombardment begins. Rochefort, whose trade is to promote sedition, is occupying himself for once in favour of

the rule that exists, and has furnished the Committee of Defence with a system of barricades for street fighting, if the enemy attempt to carry the city by assault. The parish-priests have divided themselves into relays to be on the fortifications by turns; and a constant watch is kept from the towers of Notre-Dame. Occasionally the excitement of a spy-hunt diverts the people. One was taken lately disguised as a lady; and another disguised as a hawker, who was selling a cheap popular Life of General Uhrich, the brave defender of Strasbourg. The racket of drill pervades all quarters at all hours of the day. The loungers of the boulevards and the workmen of the faubourgs are evincing an unexpected spirit of endurance. A few grow impatient for the besiegers to come on; but the besiegers are not ready yet, and announce, with the coolness that has characterised every step of the invasion, that they are taking their time to have the sooner done.

Out of the dreary city Gambetta has sailed away in a balloon for Tours. He goes to inspire the provinces with vigour and spirit to raise those armies that France needs for her deliverance. But he will never do it! The conscripts of Macon are a sample of all the new levies. In vain does he call on them in eloquent words to strike for victory or death. In vain does he prophesy smooth and hopeful things of Paris impregnable; of Paris not to be captured nor surprised; of Paris all at one within her borders, rationed already, and able to defy the enemy for long months. The republic, he cries, has no ambition, no passion, but to rescue France

from the abyss into which monarchy has plunged her. The republic will choose young men for her chiefs; Heaven will smile upon them; autumn rains will come, and the Prussians, far from home, held in check by the capital, will be decimated by slaughter, by hunger and disease. No, it is not possible that the genius of France should be evermore obscured. In the midst of disaster the sentiment of unity is still left. Paris, surrounded by the enemy, affirms the immortal device which is dictated to the whole of France. Long live the Republic! Long live France! Long live the Republic, one and indivisible!

Alas for the immortal device! The heart of France glows no more to that cry. The voices that raise it are a mere echo of an old song. When the ragged levies of the First Republic marched to its music, it was to keep out their feudal lords, returning with foreign mercenaries to bind again the chains they had just broken, to rivet anew the yoke of bitter serfdom from which they had lately emancipated themselves. They set their lives for their liberty, and won as they deserved to win.

France is in very different case now. For two generations the sons of the old peasant-heroes have been content to sow and reap, and till their little fields; to dwell safely under the rule of any easy master, submissive and patient as their own oxen. But in the cities the team is of more ardent temper. In vain has the teamster, to subdue them, fed them on chaff, and held them in terror of the whip; the

wilful, half-broken beasts have wrestled with him continually, and at some awkward touch of the goad have turned vicious, and thrown him again and again.

Napoleon alone has known how to manage them with selfish, cunning dexterity. Whenever they have waxed fat, and begun to kick to be let loose in the green pastures of freedom, he has faced them round upon the red fields of battle; and poor Jacques Bonhomme, who has been quiet and faithful, must needs leave his peaceful furrows, and plough in the fields of blood too. But there is no spark to kindle his passion now; the right and the passion are all on the other side. He only desires to live and let live. Glory? The brightest glory to him is the ripe corn waving in the sun! Patriotism? He loves his land best who makes two ears of wheat grow where but one grew before!

And now Napoleon is upset, and the reins, fallen from his hand, have been seized by the quickest and most agile witnesses of his disaster. Perhaps the Red Spectre will snatch at them next, and lash the wild cattle till they trample freedom to death!

LII.

Bismarck Prophecies Terrible Things.

BISMARCK stands forth, and, in a circular to the great powers, washes his hands, as it were, of the blood of Paris.

It is an awfully suggestive paper, read with understanding. A conviction is expressed in it that, sooner or later, Paris must fall before the German armies. And should its fall be delayed until the threatened want of the necessities of life compels it to capitulate, frightful consequences would ensue. It would be impossible for the German commanders to feed the population even for a day. The supplies in the neighbourhood are being used for the German troops, and there are no provisions within several marches of the city. The inevitable consequences will be that hundreds of thousands will die of starvation. The German commanders can do nothing but carry on the war. They intend to let those who hold power in France be brought to extremities; they will be responsible for the consequences.

What does Bismarck mean—that he is being urged beyond his intention? that he wishes the neutral powers to intervene, and prevail on France to bow to destiny and cede what Germany demands?

We cannot tell what he means, beyond what

literally he says. That is plain and pregnant speech enough.

The Germans will accomplish the task they are set upon. The French cannot stand against them at all, and do but invite destruction by their shallow confidence that they can hinder its consummation. The two sorties that have been made from Paris have been total failures. The famous city of Rouen refuses to be defended, lest she should incur the vengeance of the enemy; Vernon was occupied without a shot fired; at Étampes the national guards laid out their muskets in the market-place, to be ready for the Uhlans, and tossed their cartridges into the river. The Army of Lyons puts in no appearance; the Army of the Loire makes no progress; in the Vosges the Germans crush every force brought against them. The people are in despair in all places that the invaders menace, for the incapable defiance of the mob-soldiery exposes them to double requisitions. Save at St. Quentin, where the workmen held the town, and at Toury, where a troop recaptured some cows that the Prussians were driving off, France has had no hopeful gleam of success yet; and these gleams are too faint and transient to give any assured expectation of a brighter day.

Bismarck means that France is beaten, and ought to yield.

LIII.

As the Flood Spreads.

October 18.

THE much longed for Army of the Loire has begun its career with a defeat, a disorderly flight, the loss of three guns, 1000 prisoners, and of Orleans, the city of Jeanne d'Arc. This is the capture of von der Tann and the Bavarians. They, it seems, are enough to give an account of Gambetta's levies from the south. Rough soldiers they are, and it is faring ill with the little towns and hamlets of the fruitful Beauce. Ablis and Chérizy have been burnt with circumstances of great cruelty, and Orleans is so heavily mulcted that the bishop has deigned to plead for the remission of a part of the conquerors' demand. His cathedral is turned into a cage for the prisoners, and there is a hospital in almost every house. The city was taken by storm, and the fighting went on all up the faubourg from the gate of Paris to the Place Martroy, where stands the equestrian statue of the famous Maid. The French troops who were kept together retired into the Forest of Orleans, and General de Paladine promises to defend that at all hazards. It will be fine covert for the free-shots, who begin to make the country like a hornets' nest to the invaders. And this is why their revenges are so prompt and cruel.

Since Orleans was taken the Bavarians have shown themselves at Meung and Beaugency, and are suspected of a design on Bourges, the great

central arsenal of France. Tours also begins to tremble for its safety so sincerely that numbers of the inhabitants are moving out, and travelling to the south. It is even matter for consideration whether the members of the Government, and the foreign ambassadors who retreated thither from Paris, shall not go too.

And, not less important than Orleans, the city of Soissons has capitulated, after a bombardment of four days. It is a military position of the first importance, commanding the passage of the river Aisne, and giving the invaders a second line of railway from the frontier to Paris, and almost intact up to their lines. A tragical, sad incident marks this siege. A certain suburb covered the position of the Prussians, and a company of French sallied forth and set it on fire. While the bullets were flying, out of a house one mass of flames rushed a young woman, with an infant in her arms, and a boy of ten years old clinging to her skirts. The soldiers shouted to her to lie down, but in her terror and desperation she ran on, until she suddenly fell dead upon her children, shot through the heart.

To revert for a moment to an old story. The burning of Bazeilles, that tragical episode in the fury of the battle of Sedan, has been told and retold against the Germans, with a variety of exaggerated details which have been doubted or credited as the prejudice of hearers inclined. Many romantic and pathetic circumstances were freely added to its original horrors, but a letter from the *curé* of the parish denies them all. No woman was killed in

the place. In the heat of combat in the streets, a shot fired from a window struck a German doctor, who was passing along with a file of sick-bearers. Instantly a cry arose to burn the town, and it was fired so promptly, and in so many places at once, that the destruction was absolute. Cattle perished in the stall, and some helpless of the wounded amongst the ruins perished too; but every inhabitant with feet to run away escaped, and is living still. Living, but suffering and destitute; deprived of shelter, clothing, food; naked of all save what the charity of strangers can minister to their universal want.

Further yet spreads the flood. In the Vosges von Werder has occupied Epinal; and Garibaldi, who has arrived from Caprera to offer his services to the republic, is appointed commander-in-chief of the irregular forces, and has gone into the east to oppose him, and try if he can turn the luck in favour of France. Menotti and Ricciotti, his sons, are with him, and a few of their old comrades. Northwards, Lille and Amiens stand in peril of siege, and there is heavy fighting near St. Quentin. In Normandy Gisors is taken, and held as a store-place for the requisitions to be collected in that rich province. Every day the invaders advance, and every march is an easy triumph.

In view of this, and moved by Bismarck's awful prophecy to Paris, the neutral powers have agreed to advise an armistice, for the meeting of the National Assembly. Bismarck is willing, if he can

come to terms with the Government. M. Thiers is to be the negotiator this time.

LIV.

Paris Seething.

October 20.

PARIS has entered on the seventh week of the siege. Idle citizens and lovers of pleasure, who distrusted their own powers of endurance, left her when her troubles began; and the mixed multitude who remain have longer patience than the world gave them credit for. They set their teeth more savagely every day against the enemy, and claim to have had the best of it in a bloody fight at Bagneux, and to have repulsed an attack on the redoubt of Hautes Bruyères and Fort Bicêtre. But the easy luxurious sort did well for themselves to go; for Paris invested is no safe or pleasant sojourn.

A sign. Certain women of respectable character are preparing to enrol themselves as a corps of defence under the name of Amazons of the Seine. They are to wear a uniform and carry a rifle; they propose to go out with the troops, to fight, to succour the wounded, and tend the ambulances. Their design is laughed at, but there is no fun in it. War will be none the less cruel, but the more so, for women meddling with slaughter; and if the fashion spread amongst the peasant sort, woe betide France! The Prussians they may murder will be nothing to the good they murder in themselves: the conscience, the pity, the tender soul for suffering, that is their

birthright. The deeds of rare Jeanne d'Arc will not brook imitation by a band of common women: common furies they would grow to, as their mothers did, who sat and knitted and gossiped round the guillotine.

Another sign. One Gustave Flourens, the son of a scholar, himself a distinguished scholar, a professor of liberty with the Reds, and colonel of five battalions of national guards, raises a clamour in the streets now and then; demonstrating against the slowness and timidity of Governor Trochu, who has a plan in process of incubation, which Paris fears will not see maturity until too late for her rescue. Whenever Flourens demonstrates the Red Spectre lurks in some byeway, listening and watching. Happily, though misery abounds, the city is not yet so hard driven as to have lost its wits, or to be ready to transfer its allegiance from the powers that be to the apostles of socialism. Meat and money are scarce, and the daily rations are diminished, while the butchers' shops are opened only twice a week. Those who desire to be served in time go as early as five o'clock in the chill dark morning; and the later-comers have to stand *en queue* for hours in all manner of weather. But amongst these there is no murmuring. The dangerous dissatisfied kind are to be found in clubs and cafés, bad fellows, inferior workmen, simmering over their natural grievances, voting themselves true heirs of the men of the old republic, and moodily settling what they shall do to prove it when next the succession is open.

These are to be feared; for their will and their

power to do mischief is notorious. And I take leave to think that the measures of destruction favoured by the Government of Defence are also to be feared. Their latest feat in this way is the burning of the palace of St. Cloud, that beautiful old retreat of the sovereigns of France. They shelled it, and in spite of all that the Prussians could do to extinguish the flames, it was completely gutted by the fire. Pictures, precious sculpture, tapestry, porcelain, books, all were destroyed, and this needlessly; to deprive the enemy of a shelter which was not occupied, and of which there is enough elsewhere and close at hand. But fire, fire is being pressed into every service; rather than the Prussians shall have Paris, the Reds swear that they will burn it themselves, and make it a ruin for the world to weep at. And they are capable of keeping their oath.

To turn into the hospital at the Tuileries is almost a rest and refreshment after the joyless turmoil of the public places. There now, instead of royalty, reign sisters of charity in full sway over the wounded. Surgeon-Major Wyatt, who is gleaning experience amongst his French brethren, gives them high commendation for skill and kindness. All their medical appliances are of the best, and their work amongst the disabled is as excellent. And every day adds to their work, and will add to it.

The chief amusement left for virtuous republicans to enjoy is the daily perusal of a portion of the imperial papers. An account of the Emperor's economies is reported. His friends declare that he

has saved nothing, and is very poor; his enemies assert that he has secured an immense plunder in foreign Funds, and estates beyond the limits of France. He was a generous master to very greedy servants, and unless he gave of what was not his own he cannot have laid away much store. I incline to think that he has not; for a scheme of a novel was found amongst his private documents, and novel-writing is a branch of honest industry that he might work with profit without detracting from his dignity. Monarchs and statesmen, temporarily excluded from business, have pleasantly amused their retired-leisure by writing a book, before to-day.

The publication of the imperial secrets is revealing the means by which Paris was kept quiet when disposed to be fractious, and the way that was taken with writers who were foes to the dynasty. One of the tools of the court, a judge before whom press prosecutions were tried, and who had made himself feared and hated for his severity, was lately found dead in his chamber. He had committed suicide, and a reason why was elicited from the Emperor's dearest mysteries. It is proved that for every conviction obtained by this corrupt judge he received a gift, proportioned to the rank of the journalist under question and the term of imprisonment and amount of the fine he inflicted. Another scandal is that every so-called plot against Napoleon III. and his government, except the plots of Orsini and Pianori, were affairs got up by Pietri, the chief of police, and his spies, for purely politi-

cal purposes. It has often been insinuated that the Emperor was the arch-conspirator who kept Paris quaking; but we are such poor plotters in England that we could never reduce our minds to a belief in such supersubtilty.

It is not to be supposed that the Provisional Government would lend themselves to the publication of fabricated documents. Indeed, these have the ring of reality. The imperialists come out from the ordeal of full exposure no worse than they were often called, perhaps they even come out better; and their rivals are disappointed, on the whole, not to find them so black as they were painted.

LV.

Looking for a Deliverer.

October 21.

THE heart of France is quite down: down at that ebb when mystics begin to call upon Heaven for a deliverer, and to recite old prophecies to revive the spirit of the people. As it was in the days of Jeanne d'Arc, so is it now; earthly help and counsel fail them, and they look with expectation for Divine succour.

A document has been published in the *Constitutionnel*, which is well known in central France as the Prophecy of Blois. It was delivered by an Ursuline nun of that city in the year 1805. It foretells great troubles for Blois in 1848, and again in 1870. The former part of the prediction has come

true; that relating to the present promises a saviour to France in one whom the country does not expect, but who will give it peace and prosperity for twenty years. The troubles were to happen before the vintage, and to affect Paris especially, where a very great massacre and cruel fighting are foreshadowed. But the time of sorrow will be short; for though the women will prepare the vintages the men will return to finish the work. Meanwhile, there will be no news save by private letters. Presently three couriers, one after the other, will arrive at Blois, of whom the first will bring tidings that all is lost; the second will be flying post-haste, too fast to tarry; the third will be the bearer of good news. Then will be sung such a *Te Deum* as France never sang before, and all in honour of the saviour God shall have sent her.

It is an easy thing to mock at this as idle superstition, when everything is quiet about us. This is a hushed, autumnal day. A yellow leaf fluttering to the ground, the twitter of a solitary bird, is the only movement, the only noise. But if the air throbbed with the thunder of cannon; if the shrieks of wounded men and sighs of the dying rose from the earth; if pale hunger presided at our table, and ghastly fear kept our door, our ears would be open to many a whisper, our eyes to many a vision that seem folly to us in our safe estate. For when terror comes there ever arises in the soul that old remonstrance with God: "It were better that we were not at all than that we should suffer, and not know wherefore!" And then the recoil of trembling and

supplication before the Almighty, who is stronger than we, whose ways are beyond our finding out.

France looks for a saviour, and there is none. Those who rule her seem blind to her desperate need, as they are blind to her sins that have provoked the judgment.

M. Jules Favre has issued a new circular, of which this is the whole pith.

"It is well that France should know to what lengths Prussia pushes her ambition. She does not stop at the conquest of two of our provinces; she coldly and systematically pursues her task of annihilating us. France has no illusions left. For her it is now a question of existence. In proposing to her the sacrifice of three of her departments as the price of peace, the thing offered her was dishonour: this she rejected. She is now to be punished with death. Such is the position of affairs; but we prefer our present sufferings, our perils and our sacrifices, to the consequences of the cruel and inflexible ambition of our enemy. France, even if ultimately vanquished, will remain so great in her misfortunes that she will become an object of admiration and sympathy to the whole world. She required, perhaps, to pass through a supreme trial; she will issue from it transfigured."

More eloquent, alas, than probable! France does not bear her punishment with dignity or fortitude; we pity, but admire her we cannot. She is helpless and humiliated, and still she blusters; she would thankfully make a compromise with misfortune, but she has not the honest courage to stand out before

the world and say so. She will temporise until she is at her last gasp in the grip of Prussia, and then she will cry quarter. It will be a national edition of the capitulation of Sedan.

If that promised saviour is to come, let him come quickly!

LVI.

The Apology of the Empress.

October 28.

ST. QUENTIN is captured. Chartres is occupied. Schlettstadt is taken. And Metz has capitulated; that great city is lost to France.

When time has set the events of this war far enough away to show them in their relative proportions, a paper that is published this morning in the *Daily News*, by request of the Empress Eugénie, will be of historic value. As I read it, I could not help recalling what Cowper says concerning the men whom Providence raises up in the crisis of a dark, decisive hour when He means mercy to a land. Such a crisis was the capitulation of Sedan. But the Emperor had not the strength to seize it with power; nor Jules Favre the skill to manage it with address. How the Empress let it slip, and such a peace with it as will not be offered to France again, she shall tell in her own words.

"Since her arrival in England, the Empress Eugénie has remained a stranger to every intrigue. . . . It is not to be inferred that she has lost all hope of a restoration, but she has perceived that the mo-

ment for dynastic speculations is not yet arrived, and that too great haste would infallibly prove fatal to her hopes. At this moment her anxieties are of another kind. . . . With the same fidelity as if she were still in France, her thoughts are occupied solely with the national defence. Upon that point her ideas are in complete accord with those of the Government at Tours; the refusal of all cession of territory.

"The evidence of this may be found in her answer to the first emissary, sent to her by M. de Bismarck on the 15th of last month, when she had been only a few days in England. Prussia at that time was ready to make peace. The victories of Weissemburg and of Sedan were enough for her glory, . . . and the Chancellor of the North German Confederation proposed to the Empress to conclude a peace on the basis of the surrender of Strasbourg . . . with a portion of the department of the Lower Rhine, including about 250,000 inhabitants, and with a war indemnity of two thousand millions of francs. The Empress refused this proposition, which has remained so completely unknown that views are to-day imputed to her which would be wholly inconsistent with her past acts, and as hostile to her own interests as to those of France. No doubt, conversations take place at Chiselhurst between the Empress and her household. The chances of restoration, and the means to be employed when the hour shall strike, may well be discussed; but such views are private. . . . The Empress lives in the most absolute retirement, surrounded by a few per-

sons whose devotion is known, dividing her hopes between France and her son. . . .

"No doubt, the Empress eagerly desires to see an end of hostilities; . . . but it is certain that she does not dream of sacrificing an inch of French territory, or any part of the honour of her country, to her dynastic interest. When Alsace and Lorraine shall be no longer in question, the Empress will doubtless use every effort to put herself in agreement with the country, with a view to obtaining an honourable peace; but till then she will abstain with the same resolution and dignity as heretofore."

What a mouthpiece for the nation of France! What a view of the duties of a sovereign? Retirement into private life until the country has extricated itself from its difficulties; and then a return to the enjoyment of power. More common-sense might have been expected from a woman not born in the purple, but raised to it by a caprice of fortune. If experience be of any use to France, she will never agree again with those who so selfishly deserted her in the day of need!

LVII.

"The Greatest Event of the Month."

October 29.

THE long agony of Metz was over on Thursday, the 27th, and it was time. The investment had lasted ten weeks. On the morning of the surrender

five soldiers lay dead of starvation at their post by Montigny; and for the two previous days no rations had been issued to the troops. A week ago General Coffinière, commandant of the city and garrison, warned Marshal Bazaine that he could not any longer supply with food the army encamped outside the walls, and they must shift for themselves. The French outposts then ceased firing on the Prussian pickets, an unnatural silence prevailed in their lines, and the men were tacitly allowed to desert, as many as could. But a whole company going over together, the enemy saw through their intention, and sent them back. Bazaine tried to capitulate for his army without the city, but his offer was rejected; and the Germans, perceiving that the end was near, when tens of thousands of hungered men would be cast upon their mercy, ordered up from Saarbrück vast trains of provisions to be in readiness.

A night sortie was promised to the French soldiers as a final effort; and a report of the design was carried by a spy to the besiegers, who forthwith massed their troops for a desperate shock. But it never came. Instead, came a messenger to Prince Frederick-Charles to announce that the prize was his—city, fortress, garrison, and Rhine Army, all his.

General Changarnier went first to treat of the terms of surrender. When he left the Prince's quarters, he said to some officers standing about the door: "Gentlemen, may you never suffer a day like this!" The old man (he is eighty years old) was quite broken with emotion. He had found the

Prince very stern. These Germans are Christians; their first act after the capitulation was to give up their own meal of bread to the prisoners. But they are severe; and they will be more and more severe, as the war drags on, increases their sacrifices, and embitters their feelings.

Besides scarcity of food, there has been a total want of medical necessities for a month past in Metz. The dead in the siege number 35,000, and there are 19,000 sick and wounded in the hospitals. Strange and terrible diseases are rife amongst them, of which the investing force has not escaped the contagion. The sum of misery is incalculable; and their privations have made scare-crows and skeletons of poor souls innumerable. Yet, to the last, the rich and the superior officers fared sumptuously; and when the city was opened the shops were full of meat, that had been kept back by wretches to whom the extremity of their fellow-men would have been but an opportunity of gain. As if the crisis had taken the citizens by surprise, they raged furiously when they knew that they were given up to the Prussians. Some burst into the cathedral, and rang the tocsin; others tolled the funeral-bell. The cry in the streets was incessant: "All is over for France! All is over for our unhappy country! Treason! Treason!" The national guards refused to lay down their arms; and a company of dragoons, with their captain at their head, rode about the city frantically, proclaiming that death was preferable to such dishonour.

The drunken, hysterical excitement sobbed it-

self out. Marshal Bazaine, whose life was in danger from the populace, was taken under the protection of the enemy; and, as a mark of respect, the Imperial Guard were allowed to march in review before Prince Frederick-Charles, and to pile their arms at Frescati. The other troops laid down their arms in the arsenals, and then retired into their cantonments. The number of prisoners, all told, is 173,000, including three marshals and 6000 officers. These will not be released on parole, because General Ducrot, who surrendered at Sedan, took French-leave afterwards, and has rejoined the fighting army in Paris.

The night after the capitulation was splendid with the Aurora Borealis. Its magnificent, intense red glow lit up the whole heavens. And below burned all the bivouac fires in the German quarters, from Mars-la-Tour to Courcelles, and from Jouy to Maizières. The roads were covered with moving, silent masses of men. Already some had got their marching orders for the camp before Paris; and others for the fields of the campaign upon the Loire.

The fugitive peasants are creeping back to their villages, to find graves in their gardens, and ruined walls where they left a home.

And Marshal Bazaine has set out to report himself at Wilhelmshöhe.

The order of the day issued by King William on the capitulation of Metz is worth recording.

"Soldiers of the confederate armies: When we took the field three months ago I expressed my con-

fidence that God would be with our just cause. This confidence has been realised. I recall to you Wörth, Saarbrück, and the bloody battles before Metz, Sedan, Beaumont, and Strasbourg: each engagement was a victory for us. You are worthy of glory. You have maintained all the virtues which especially distinguish soldiers. By the capitulation of Metz the last army of the enemy is destroyed. I take advantage of this moment to express my thanks to all of you, from the general to the soldier. Whatever the future may still bring to us, I look forward to it with calmness, because I know that with such soldiers victory cannot fail.—WILHELM.”

LVIII.

First Glimpse of the Commune.

November 7.

No armistice! Paris will have no armistice. Paris raged furiously at the news of Metz fallen. Already the ardent spirits were in a louring, suspicious mood over the leisurely tactics of Governor Trochu, who, entreated to go faster and more vigorously to work against the besiegers, replies that his plan, for good reasons, must be kept to himself, and he will not let the impatient people force his hand. There had been a sortie, with heavy loss of men and guns, on the 21st ult.; but on the 28th the Free Shots of the Press had sallied in fine temper, and driven the Prussians out of the village of Le Bourget. The 30th, however, saw it lost again by the supine-

ness of the regular troops; and Paris was taking it sorely to heart, when she received the stunning blow of the reduction of Metz. The circumstances were favourable for a demonstration, and Colonel Flourens, with one Blanqui to help, and a company of national guards from Belleville, raised a formidable riot in the city. They invaded the Hôtel de Ville, and, calling themselves "the people," insisted on the resignation of the Government. The elect of the rioters were ready to step into their places; and, by way of voiding them, violent hands were laid on Governor Trochu himself, on Jules Favre, and half-a-dozen more of the ministers, who were locked up for several hours, until another battalion of national guards released them, and drove the men of Belleville, who did not run away, into the cellars.

The next day this plain question was proposed to the people:

"Do the citizens of Paris recognise the authority of the Government for the National Defence?"

The answer was, "Yes"; by a majority of 557,995 votes, against 62,638 for the Commune, according to 1793.

The hands of Trochu being strengthened by this popular vote of confidence, he issued the following proclamation:—

"You order us to remain at the post of danger assigned to us by the Revolution of the 4th of September. We will remain with the courage derived from your support, and with the consciousness of the great duties imposed upon us; the first

of which is that of defence. We shall prevent criminal movements by the severe execution of the laws."

In pursuance of this declaration, the officers of the insurgent national guards were cashiered, and General Clement Thomas, an old-fashioned disciplinarian, to be relied on in emergency, was appointed commandant of the whole force. The men shut up in the cellars at the Hôtel de Ville were disarmed, and sent about their business; and the ringleaders of the riot, Flourens, Blanqui, and some others, were consigned to safe prison.

For the moment lovers of order breathe freely, when they can forget the Prussians beleaguering the city; but we shall hear of the communists again. Their sketch for a Committee of Public Safety included the names of Victor Hugo, Louis Blanc, Ledru Rollin, Félix Pyat, Rochefort, Flourens, Blanqui, Déléscluze, Dorian, and Millière; fanatics for their principles, most of them, and men of audacity, but still very far from being the worst fanatics Paris has to fear.

The appearance of the Aurora Borealis over the city on the night of the 26th was taken for a sign of great terror, for a sign of civil war, and the commotion raised by Flourens was like the warning of it. It is suppressed for the time, but men say openly that the most dreadful troubles will begin when the Prussians go. Order is so dissolved that soon it may be a question what rule to obey; and when every man does what is right in his own eyes, anarchy is master.

The balloon-post is now supplemented by carrier pigeons, and the first sheet of *The Times* is filled with messages to friends, and inquiries about relatives left in Paris or scattered elsewhere. These advertisements contain the germ of a thousand romances! Somnambulists and fortune-tellers are driving a good trade with anxious tender souls divided from those they love.

Want begins to be severely felt. The soldiers have a ration of meat only twice a week; no wonder that, as at St. Denis the other day, they are easily beaten. Women and children stray over the fields in quest of food until they come under the Prussian fire, and when bidden to go back they refuse, saying that they prefer death to their miserable life in the city. One morning as many as two thousand were ranging about for potatoes in the neighbourhood of Mont Valérien, every instant their lives in peril. But they had the courage of hungry despair.

Since the negotiations for an armistice have fallen through, more English and American subjects have left the city by the intervention of their ambassadors. But still some four hundred of our people are left, to whom it is a country, and who have no friends or ties elsewhere in the world. With this little flock remains Dr. Smyth, an American clergyman; the British protestantism which serves pleasant foreign chaplaincies in the piping times of peace not being robust enough to stand the trial of a state of war and siege.

There must be a vast amount of uncomplaining misery amongst all classes now, except the few

rich. And for them money will not buy dainty meat. At Trouville, Granville, and St. Malo there have been riots to hinder the exportation of food commodities to England and the Channel Islands. At Trouville two men were killed, and no more ships will sail there for the present. Brittany butter, which is the chief winter supply of the Paris markets, is selling in London now at eighteen-pence the pound. The good country stuff cannot get into Paris by any means.

The most amusing of the newspaper correspondents, who with his humour often infuses a vein of pathos, tells us of a grisette whom he met one night on the quay, as he roamed in hungry melancholy, getting rid of time. She had eaten her last crust, and spent her last *sou* yesterday; she was houseless and starving, and had come to drown herself in the river, but did not dare, because the water looked so cold. He took her to a restaurant, and gave her coffee and bread; gave her heart perhaps to bear up against hardship till the dawn of better days. This gentleman had himself dined lightly on a *ragout* of cat; with a grain of salt, either smothered in onions or in a *ragout*, cat is very fine eating, delicious.

Oh, Cosy, lying so round and plump and fussy of white fur upon the rug, what a fat, fat dish you would make!

LIX.

The Beam in Our Own Eye.

WE are tired of hearing Paris moralised over as the wickedest of cities; the luxurious wickedness must be strained off by this time, and the mass of the people are enduring with noble patience such calamity as we have never had to try us.

For dark places full of cruelty London is a match for any city in Christendom. Nathaniel Hawthorne, the American novelist, a man who knew many countries, has recorded that such vermin children, and such ghastly spectral shapes of men and women as haunt some streets of our capital haunt none other in the civilised world. Like our puritan fathers, we still compound for the respectable vices we are inclined to, by denouncing the pernicious follies of our neighbours. Paris may be ripe for destruction; but when we are about allotting the judgments of God, we might wisely consider whether a judgment be due to ourselves, and whether we have time to avert it. If we are strict in our inquisition we shall discover that we are suffering all we complain of for old sins that we have sinned, and neglects that we have let prosper; and that the peril of a democratic revolution which some profess to see approaching is the shadow on the national conscience of long arrears of public and private duty. As Englishmen never drive evils to extremity, some are already seeking how to pay

these long arrears, lest the creditors put in a distress.

Government can do much for the welfare of a nation, but it cannot make up for economy of personal endeavour; and there is just now a tendency to lean back upon government for the correction of all evils, instead of doing our own part with more diligence and conscience; though no people are so well convinced as ourselves,

“How small of all that human hearts endure,
That part which laws or kings can cause or cure.”

The simplest soul that ever suffered must know this for true as well as Goldsmith knew it. But he knew more. In his time the fenceless fields were being already divided by the sons of wealth, and the bare-worn commons denied to the sons of labour; and a vision rose before his eyes of a day when England might become one sink of level avarice, and the increase of the rich and the decay of the poor reach a point when statesmen must regard it and consider.

That day has arrived, and statesmen are considering it, but not yet, perhaps, as if they realised its supreme significance.

Under the new Reform Act, with the newspapers telling everybody everything, with education opening wide the eyes and minds of the young generation, it cannot be much longer possible for rich men to rule the law, if men who are not rich are honest, and have the courage of their opinions.

It is not probable that power will ever change hands. Wisdom still comes by abundance of leisure:

“And just experience tells in every soil,
That those who think must govern those who toil.”

But upon the lives of those who toil a little more sunshine is much to be desired. They keep the world going, and deserve that the rulers of the world should watch for them, and not leave their quarrel with bad customs to grow dangerous, and be taken up by stump-orators. There is an ugly development appearing in the form of men, bold professors of the fool's faith that there is no God, who are passing on to the practical conclusion that there is no law. They dub themselves the friends and advocates of Labour and Poverty; but they are the flittering, phosphorescent flames that betray where corruption lurks, over which I, for one, should like to see a timely extinguisher dropped, and the contagious rottenness broomed away with a resolute arm.

One of the curses by which Israel fell was the oppression of the hireling in his wages. Modern political economy holds it for an axiom that statute-law cannot remedy this, it must be left to the natural law of supply and demand.

I am not learned enough to contest this, but I think it might be contested on the ground that law is bound to protect those who cannot protect themselves, and does, in fact, protect them in a certain measure. The temptation of men who have the power of money in their hands to grind those

who have the power of labour must have existed ever since the discovery of luxury, or there would not be so many terrible denunciations of that iniquity in the Jewish Scriptures, which we accept as the record of decisions in a Divine Court of Appeal. If we referred to these precedents in a good humour I cannot help thinking that they would throw a light upon some present difficulties, and abridge the strife between Labour and Capital which wastes strength and profits nobody but a few grievance-mongers. Capital against a strike of Labour may be likened to a treasure-ship at sea, and bread and water spent. Labour against a lock-out of Capital may be likened to a field untilled, that of itself will only bring forth thorns and briars. They must agree in the end, because for dear life's sake they must; but, for showing the way, I confess to having more confidence in the illumination of men's minds by the old, forgotten Jewish lamps, than in the maxims of political economy, or the new lights held aloft by pestilent demagogues to distort the facts they fall upon. Listen to a few of these precedents: they are in contradiction of some later counsels, but say, have they not the ring of sovereign truth?

"The profit of the earth is for all."

"Whereas thy servant worketh truly, entreat him not evil, nor the hireling that bestoweth himself wholly for thee. Let thy soul love a good servant, and defraud him not of his liberty."

"To labour and be content with what a man hath is a sweet life."

Labour, then, was not meant to eat out the core of life.

The rules for the husbandman and craftsman are equally clear and rigid, All their desire, their diligence, their mind, their care, are to be given to their work, to finish and polish it perfectly. But have we not heard of new rules amongst the artificers, quite at variance with these old ones and with common-sense? rules for evening the man who is wise in his work and praised for his skill with the slack hand?

"Idleness shall clothe a man with rags. He that will not work neither let him eat."

That is the ancient wisdom. But trade crotchets and philanthropy made law have disallowed it. A man shall be as lazy as he will, but food, covering, and shelter shall be his right. Almsgiving to the poor indigent and the poor by casualty I would be the last to limit; but we do begin to want a stroke of discipline for the poor thriftless, slothful, and discontented. These are a creeping evil. These are the untaught mob who lie to themselves, and lay their shame on society, whose peril they are; whom arrogant demagogues, seeking their own, flatter and misguide, and, lumping them with the industrious who live by laborious work, call "the people." These are they who, suffered too long, become the unruly multitude, whose fear is worse than death, whose mischief we shall yet, probably, witness in Paris.

LX.

"Peace, Peace, where there is No Peace."

November 10.

THE Empress Eugénie has been to Wilhelms-höhe, and has returned to Chiselhurst, looking as fair and graceful as a visitor for the mere pleasure of it. Hope catches at straws, but nothing has come of her meeting with the Emperor and the marshals, who, by leave of King William, also adjourned to Wilhelmshöhe after the capitulation of Metz.

The siege of Paris lingers inactive. The Germans, with toil and trouble, are bringing up their great guns to add the argument of force to famine, if Paris will not yield without force. Meanwhile, Trochu and Ducrot are making ready for such a sortie as they sanguinely expect will break the besiegers' lines before the great guns arrive. Never were the people in a more unsundering mood. If they had not been resolved beforehand on having no armistice, the negotiations, it appears, would have failed on the matter of re-victualling the city, to which Bismarck would not agree. The moment was inauspicious, though peace is the sore need of France, and the hearty desire of Germany. And both had excellent counsel.

In his last dispatch Lord Granville assumed the responsibility of representing the importance of making every concession compatible with honour in the present circumstances of the war. Two

moral causes are recognised as having immensely aided the great strength of the Germans. "They have been fighting to repel the threat of a foreign invasion, and to assert the right of a great country to constitute itself in the way most conducive to the development of its resources. The glory of these efforts will be increased if it can be truly said in history that the King of Prussia had exhausted every attempt for peace before the orders for the attack on Paris were given, and that the conditions of peace were just, moderate, and in accordance with the true policy and spirit of the age."

Nothing has, however, yet occurred to abate the pretensions of the conquerors.

LXI.

For How Long?

November 14.

DIJON is taken, Verdun has capitulated, Neu-Brisach has surrendered, Belfort is invested, Thionville is bombarded, but Orleans, the City of the Maid, is delivered from von der Tann and his barbarians! The people think that Jeanne d'Arc is sending them prosperity. De Paladine and the Loire Army have manœuvred the Germans to a distance of twenty miles or more, after several bloody encounters, in which they lost severely, but captured, as a set-off against their losses, a thousand prisoners and two guns, and killed or wounded some seven hundred of the enemy. The Loire

Army enormously outnumbered the Bavarians, who lie now about Toury, waiting for reinforcements, and their opportunity of revenge.

Gambetta begins to shout as if France were already out of the wood. Indeed, this gleam of fortune is a vast encouragement to all French hearts, and the patriotic Gascon rushed post-haste from Tours to Orleans to congratulate the soldiers who had won it. If he could infuse his own fire and energy into ten thousand of them, there might yet be hope for France. But De Paladine makes no sign of leaving Orleans, though his mission is to loosen the grasp of the Prussians on Paris. He has 200,000 men, but his caution evidently betrays that he dares not tempt the danger of an advance with them yet. And one victory cannot reverse the fortunes of a campaign. The Germans, checked for a day, will redouble their efforts, and quickly retrieve their misadventure. We hear of 150,000 more landwehr preparing to march, in case the country should resist after Paris falls.

Gambetta's proclamation shall preserve this happy episode for France in the story of the war.

"Soldiers,—Your courage and your efforts have brought back victory. To you France owes her first consolation, her first ray of hope. I am happy to convey to you the expression of the public gratitude, and the praises and recompenses which the Government awards to success. Led by chiefs vigilant, faithful and worthy of you, you have recovered discipline and strength; you have re-taken Orleans with the ardour of old troops accustomed

to conquer, and have proved that France, far from being overwhelmed by reverses which have no precedent in history, intends to assume in her turn a vigorous and general offensive. The advanced guard of the country, you are on the road to Paris. Let us not forget that Paris awaits us. Our honour is staked on our succeeding in loosening the grasp of the barbarians who threaten her with fire and pillage. Redouble your constancy and your ardour. You now know the enemy. Their superiority consisted in the number of their cannons. Recover the French dash and the fury which ought to help to save the country. With such soldiers the republic will issue victorious from the struggle.—**GAMBETTA.**”

LXII.

Discursive.

November 18.

FROM soft November grey, hazy and still, with a solemn glory of foliage in the rare gleams of sun, we have passed suddenly into stern winter. There is snow in the north, and in our fair island, rough, cold wind and weather. The summer visitors are gone with the summer leaves, and we are dull and depressed as the season.

“What shall we do for news when the exciting stories of the war are over?” somebody asks.

Oh! I wish they were over now. Any little domestic chat is better—the marriage that is to be between the young Marquis of Lorne and the Prin-

cess Louise; school-board discussions; work, play, trade, anything composing, sensible, and useful.

The school-boards are the great home-interest of the period, and whether ladies are eligible to serve upon them. I trust they are, and that one or two may be elected on each board, if only to speak a word of common-sense when learned gentlemen debate whether washing and cooking shall be parts of elementary education for little girls; washing being the hardest labour to which an able-bodied woman can apply; and to lift a frying-pan off the fire, with the fat bubbling, a more nervous matter by far than snuffing a candle with one's fingers.

And quite as nervous a matter is it to meddle with the seething caldron of our neighbours' business. We are admonished from Cologne, touching our endeavours towards peace, that if France had been the victor in this war with Prussia, she would next have fallen upon us, to avenge our share in her humiliation at Waterloo. That is an old prophecy. There is another to the effect that Napoleon will not die until he has seen London as the leader of a French army of invasion. Time and chance happen to all nations. England does not distrust the justice of God. If the day come, her sons will fight and die manfully, and not stain their honour. As for Napoleon and his star, and his faith in it, and his fatalism; he is doing penance now, and is very anxious to be forgiven his sins, and trusted for future pious intentions: but *don't* trust him! Think

in a whisper, when he most protests, and promises amendment, how once—

“The devil was sick, and the devil a monk would be;
But the devil got well, and the devil a monk was he!”

But a truce to French and Germans for awhile! Let us talk of ourselves; we have, unhappily, something to talk of that is not amusing. Still, it cannot lie very heavy on my mind, or I should not have run thus far in my discursive meditations without remembering it.

The Russian bear shakes his chains at us! Clouds are rising east and west of our prosperity. President Grant summons us to settle the outstanding difficulty of the *Alabama*, that dashing Confederate privateer, equipped at Liverpool, which did so much damage to the mercantile marine of the Northern States during the War of Secession. Prince Gortschakoff takes the same opportunity of announcing, on the part of Russia, that she was unfairly manacled by the Treaty of 1856, which closed the Crimean War, and she will be freed from its fetters. The moment is critical both for peace and for honour. Honour will not allow that Russia may tear up the treaty at her own pleasure; but conscience acknowledges that she suffered wrong at our hands when we bound her by it, and that she has her justification in demanding release. Lord Granville has replied to both our creditors in a dignified manner which the press commends; but the Funds have fallen—a sure sign of disturbance

that may prelude an appeal to bootless war. God avert it, and show us the way to a peaceful solution!

For once in our history we have a prime minister who holds it for true that the golden rule will work as well between nations as between individuals, and that is the principle of his foreign policy. Some of us have confidence in it, but like all novelties it is exposed to severe criticism. Time was when we fought or subsidised every war in Europe; and that we should refrain from active intervention now, and make no money-contributions except to succour the victims, is a reform in our traditional ways and customs not easy to be understood by the belligerents, nor by the martial spirits amongst ourselves. They tell us we let our sword rust while we make haste to get rich, and that our fat comfort will smother our glory. The wits of Berlin call the quarter of a million gathered for the sick and wounded our "Conscience Money," and rate us soundly for not hindering the war—as if John Bull were Jove Omnipotent! Let them say, pacific mortals, with the shortest of memories! We recollect, if they do not, how, between the first rumour of war and the declaration, there was only the span between the rumbling of the storm a mile off and the thunder-clap overhead. 'Tis a pity, the misunderstanding of motives, but 'tis nothing new. England has been a city of refuge for the great unfortunate and the persecuted righteous ever since it was a nation, and amongst such a variety of involuntary guests we keep the peace by the exercise

of forbearance. But it is a little too much to ask that we should keep the peace in the highways and byeways of all Europe!

LXIII.

The Great Sortie.

December 6.

THERE was a thrill of alarm in the German camp on the news of the evacuation of Orleans by von der Tann; and for a week and a day King William, and all his men investing Paris, were alert and ready at any instant to boot and saddle and begone. But now the alarm is past, and King William sleeps and wakes safely, still master at Versailles.

It was the 9th of last month that the Loire Army was victorious over the Bavarians. Paris was glad at the good tidings, and began to watch wistfully for the heroic hands that North and South were pledged to stretch to her deliverance. A sortie in force was promised her on a day when it should be known that the Loire Army was on its road, and immense pains and labour were spent in organising it efficiently. There was another exodus in anticipation of the coming woe, a dismal exodus; the fugitives went out on foot, in rain and mud and miserable cold, and were four days in reaching Versailles. The accounts they brought from the besieged city were full of pathos. Hope was not diminished in the breasts of the people, and they believed themselves in sight of the end of their sorrow. But that

Trochu's heart did not beat high with expectation may be gathered from his manifesto on the eve of the event, in which he throws upon the Germans the responsibility of the blood about to be shed. Ducrot, who was to command the chief army, and was entrusted with its main object of effecting a junction with De Paladine, took a sacramental oath not to re-enter the capital unless victorious. And on Monday, the 29th, all was in readiness for the hopeful endeavour, with the Archbishop of Paris and eight hundred of the Christian Brethren to accompany the soldiers as litter-bearers of the wounded, and comforters of those appointed to die.

But even while the troops were assembling at their posts in the city, the Loire Army was suffering defeat. De Paladine had directed Ducrot to give him the meeting at Fontainebleau; but Prince Frederick-Charles intercepted his march at Beaunella-Rolande, and so completely broke his force, and discouraged it, that to advance was impossible. A thousand French were left dead upon the field; the wounded were four times as many, and the prisoners unwounded doubled that again. While Ducrot, under cover of the night, was issuing from Paris with 150,000 men and 400 guns, and making for the bridges of the Marne, to gain the Fontainebleau road, De Paladine was retreating upon Orleans. Ducrot did gain the Fontainebleau road, and drove the Würtembergers and Saxons out of their positions; and Vinoy and Trochu led forth their troops in opposite directions, to keep the besiegers everywhere so well employed, that men might

not be detached to reinforce the slender line that had to support the brunt of his attack. On Tuesday and Wednesday a dreadful battle was fought round Paris, much like the battles before Metz. It was supported by gun-boats on the river, by armed engines on the circular railway, and by a hot and incessant artillery fire from the forts on nearly the whole circumference. The fighting at Villers, Champigny, and Brie on the Marne was as fierce as any fighting in the war. The luck fluctuated many times in the course of the long conflict. The French marine infantry acquitted themselves valiantly, the marching battalions and the Breton mobiles did well, and the national guards not much amiss; but when Wednesday night arrived, and there was still no sign of the Loire Army coming to aid, the spirit of the soldiers flagged. They were hungered, athirst and weary; they had not broken the iron ring of the besiegers, and they had lost some thousands of their boldest and bravest hearts.

There was a truce of arms next day to bury the dead.

The day after that, the battle was renewed by the Würtembergers, to recover from Ducrot the villages on the Marne that he had occupied. After eight hours' obstinate struggle they did recover them. And thus the great sortie ended.

LXIV.

Fickle Fortune.

December 12.

ORLEANS is lost again. Thus fickle fortune, after a moment's flattery, sinks France lower than before!

The country is one bewildering whirlpool of misery and slaughter, with Paris for the centre of the turbulent vortex. North, south, east, west, are all being drawn into the fatal circle.

After a week of doubtful rumours, the news for certain is that the Loire Army has been again bitterly defeated, and, to spare Orleans the horrors of bombardment, has abandoned it to the enemy. And now Prince Frederick-Charles, the Duke of Mecklenburg, and von der Tann are ranging abroad to take Le Mans, and Blois, and Tours itself—that fair and gracious city which has never heard the footstep, never seen the face, of invading foe before.

And the Army of the North has shown no better metal. At Amiens it sustained such an overthrow from Manteuffel that the Germans entered the city straightway. They have walked peacefully since into Rouen and Dieppe, while the French troops are betaking themselves to shelter behind the walls of Lille. "Infamous capitulations!" says Gambetta, and leads the cry of treason against the surrendering commanders.

Gambetta is losing his head. Too much zeal is driving him mad. He has made a pact with

death, and perish France, but he will rescue her! He cannot understand how De Paladine could give up Orleans, having such an army at his back; and, distrustful of every general who does not succeed, he shuffles them from command to command, puts down one, sets up another, and raves of the invincibility of the republic, as if at that shibboleth and the mere stamp of his foot veterans would spring from the earth in full panoply of war. He was bred a lawyer, and knows not much how soldiers are made. He fancies that his own ardour must needs inspire others, since it inflames, consumes himself; and with more conscripts already than he can shoe, clothe, arm, or drill, he is calling upon husbands and fathers, and all able men, to stand forth in defence of their country.

The most troublesome defenders at this moment are the free-shots, a peril alike to friend and foe. They are multiplying fast, and taking to guerilla warfare as if it were sport. Led by Ricciotti Garibaldi, they surprised the Prussians in Châtillon one grey morning, killed or disabled a hundred and fifty, and drove the rest away with the loss of horse and baggage. It was they who, by a night-attack on the sleeping enemy at Ablis, brought down the fiery revenge that destroyed it; and they again, who by purposeless and ineffectual resistance provoked the burning of Châteaudun and Chérizy. In the wooded regions of the Orleanais, they are such a scourge to convoys, and patrolling Uhlans, that the German commanders have promulgated a warning of death without mercy to every stranger, foreigner

and native Frenchman, whom they may take in arms, unless the prisoner wear uniform, and belong to some troop under regular command. The poachers and wild woodsmen of the forest will not much heed this decree. They are always in the way of dangerous adventure, and one chance of death the more will not count against the joy of shooting a Prussian.

LXV.

Loss and Gain.

December 15.

THE Germans do not let the grass grow under their feet! Unhasting, unresting, they move on, to accomplish whatever von Moltke appoints. They are in Blois, and they menace Tours so imminently that Gambetta and the other members of the Government have migrated to Bordeaux, for fear of capture. The foreign ministers have accompanied their flight; and as many of the inhabitants as could afford the luxury of escape have followed their example.

To continue the catalogue of spoliated places:—Montmédy has capitulated, Cherbourg and Havre are threatened, and Honfleur is occupied. And, last of all, Phalsbourg, gallant little Phalsbourg, the first place attacked in the war, has just fallen after a blockade of four months.

“Enter, gentlemen, if such be your pleasure; there is nothing now to keep you out;” was General Talhouet’s message to the besiegers, when, his food

gone, his ammunition spent, and his garrison half dead, only the empty shell of the citadel was left, and that battered and broken till Vauban's ghost would hardly know it.

Brave men respect a brave enemy; and the Germans carried in food and wine, and gave their gaunt, famished antagonists a good dinner, and congratulated them on their nobleness. And thus Phalsbourg, famous in many wars, and familiar as a household word in many romantic histories, reverts to the ancient German dominion without shedding a leaf of her laurels.

For gain. The victorious King of Prussia is to be Emperor when peace crowns his glory.

In the unanimous voice of the German princes and free towns, in the united wish of the German nation and its representatives, he will recognise a call of Providence, to which, relying on God's blessing, he promises to conform.

When all is over—what a gain to balance what a loss!

LXVI.

Signs of the Times.

A FEW weeks ago it was a marvel to me when I met any one whose interest was not absorbed in the war. I begin now to understand why people who have lived long in the world avert their minds from such immense disaster. They feel helpless, powerless, against the sweeping fate. Some have

ceased from reading the newspapers, unable to bear the hideous phantasmagoria that flow over their pages day after day. Others, urged by an impulse of pity stronger than their pain, have thrown themselves into the work of softening the tragedy that casts such dreadful shadows. The Society of Friends has taken in hand the desolate villages round about Metz; the *Daily News* has its agents in the neighbourhood of Sedan; the National Fund has its commissioners in Paris and at Versailles, at Meaux, about Orleans and Amiens, and wherever there is need; and beneficent men and women, too many to enumerate, and affiliated to no society, are giving their means and their leisure to lighten the mass of human misery; though faster, far faster than they can lighten, it increases upon their path.

When is it to cease? The vision of a Bonapartist restoration scares republican France, and my vivid sympathy is with the men who vow they will fight against that while they have a foot to stand on. All the suffering of France will be pure loss if that corrupt rule is to be re-established! But the Adulamites in Paris are very bitter of soul, much indebted some, envious and malicious others; honest fanatics but a few. They wait their turn, and I fear they will have it. There is one Déléscluze, an old conspirator, often in prison, who makes himself very loud already. The terror of their wild anarchy may, in the end, help back the man who answered for order while he was sovereign. But is there no alternative between the tyranny of bad rulers in

high places, and the tyranny of the lowest of the people, led by fanatics and assassins? France will have to find one, or short and uneasy will be her peace. If she would only shake off her moral lethargy, and learn that all her members have their uses! It is sad, sad to think that, after the horrors of invasion, political and social seers predict the worse horrors of a fratricidal civil war.

The world is all in commotion with its wars and rumours of wars! Russia still growls; Bismarck repudiates the Treaty of Luxembourg. There are destructive hurricanes, earthquakes, inundations, fires, all the elements at strife with mankind; and while some put aside the newspapers as too woeful to read, others study them like a revelation, and announce with awe that these must surely be the *last times*, of which it is foretold that "there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring: men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth."

It is a shallow philosophy that derides the simple faith which passes knowledge.

"He that liveth for ever created all things. All things obey His will. To whom hath He given power to declare His works? There may be nothing taken from them, neither may anything be put unto them, neither can the ground of them be found out. When a man hath done, then he beginneth; and when he leaveth off then shall he be doubtful." Thus far the Son of Sirach.

Simple faith stands in fear and reverence; shallow philosophy seeks to explain all, to level all with the common understanding. But there is a faculty of wonder in the soul of man that must needs have its sustenance. Simple faith, nourished on Holy Scripture, looks up to the heavens as visibly declaring the glory and power of the Eternal who maketh His angels spirits and His ministers a flaming fire: shallow philosophy spies the firmament through a glass, and takes it to pieces with curious mechanical audacity. Simple faith believes that God made man upright and in His own image, and that in the seeking out of many inventions he has lost his primitive wisdom and beauty: shallow philosophy starts him from a germ, and develops him through monkeyhood to his present perfection; though there is good evidence that for five or six thousand years man has not made any mental, moral, or physical advance, good evidence that while fashions of faith and manners have fluctuated, human nature has remained the same.

We can understand so little, we know positively so little, that it is not becoming to mock at the simple faith which links the wondrous signs in heaven with the convulsions that shake the earth. There is a dignity in this ancient superstition, if superstition it is to be called, which does not characterise the modern spiritualism.

Think for a moment. Who is not more or less susceptible of atmospheric influences? Who is not a riddle to himself? Who can always give the reason why of his humours, moods, emotions? Luna-

tics rage at the full o' the moon. Why may not nations be supposed to go mad under the fierce elemental disturbances of nature? It is impossible to demonstrate these mysteries, or to bring them to any proof.

And when all is said, it is nobler to believe that the Northern Lights and dark eclipses, that the earthquakes, storms, and tempests of the times, are shadows and messengers of the judgments of God, than to believe that they have no significance for men, and are but the cogs and wheels in the uninspired mechanism of the universe.

When men and women of the polished intellectual class are propagating a new philosophy to teach that round tables may be under possession of disembodied spirits, who rap out communications to spirits still in the flesh, by means of their wooden legs, it is no time to laugh at the higher reach of the simple who, witnessing the signs in the heavens, interpret them as the warnings of His wrath who made the heavens.

LXVII.

Christmas-tide in Paris.

SINCE Paris was shut up, how long? In months, and weeks, and days, only so long; but in dreary monotony, *years*.

Christmas is come, a Christmas of dolour.

Never was there a more terrible winter. Every pool is ice-bound, the earth is frozen hard as a

flint, the wind cuts like steel. By the fireside, in the midst of our comforts, we shiver. The delicate and the 'infirm drop away from life in this inclemency, as the last leaves of autumn drop from the tree.

And if thus it be with us, how must it be with Paris?

Come after what may, Paris deserves well of France for the stubborn tenacity of her defence, hoping against hope for a deliverer. The Parisians do love their city. The French do love their country. It is intolerable that the Prussians should have a mousehole of it, and so their resistance goes beyond reason. But while Paris is resolved not to give in, Germany is resolved not to be tired out; and as Germany has the stronger arm, Germany must prevail in the end.

But the end is not yet, though the weekly death-rate approaches four thousand. There is no fuel in the city, except for those who can buy it dear. A quarter of a pound of horseflesh is a portion for three persons. A cabbage costs five francs, a scanty dinner at a restaurant eight francs. The workmen, not at work, are paid and rationed as soldiers, to keep them out of mischief, and are better off than ever in their lives; but their wives and children suffer with severity. Little coffins are for ever being carried along the streets; and women stand for hours in the biting blast, scarce covered with their rags, waiting in pale expectancy for a dole of soup or bread, or a mouthful of meat. Four hundred thousand necessitous poor souls are thus fed at the

public kitchens; and their lean, haggard, hunted look betrays that famine has already begun to gnaw at their vitals. But these never murmur. Their courageous endurance is a wonder to men.

One day there was held a council of the authorities, civil and military, to consider what were the resources still left in the city. A panic rose amongst the people on a rumour that soon there would be no more bread, which signified an early surrender to the abhorred enemy. But a Government proclamation dissipated the alarm, and restored patience. There was still bread and wine for ten weeks, it (the proclamation) said, and flesh for a month, if the horses were slaughtered at the rate of five hundred a day. After the white bread was eaten, the citizens would only have to fall back on the wholesome brown loaf, which is the ordinary diet of the peasants. Meanwhile it was forbidden to bake biscuits or to sell flour. And with this prospect of ten weeks' longer slow pining and dying, Paris was flattered into confidence again.

It is touching to witness how the mass of the people confide in the men who are over them, but it is cruel too. They do not know, they have never been told, that at Orleans the Loire Army lost 10,000 prisoners and 77 guns; and they are looking for De Chanzy to come up by Chartres with 140,000 men. They do not know that the Army of the North is in retreat; that Manteuffel and his Germans are ranging along the sea-board of Normandy; and that the Prussian landwehr pour over

the frontier, like a swollen torrent, strong to bear down all opposition.

A week ago, under the violent urgency of the men who make themselves obnoxious to Trochu for his excessive deliberation, another sortie was made on the same scale as the sortie that had failed on the last day of November. It had been long preparing, and the soldiers were vehemently adjured to do their utmost; but the weather was terribly cold, they were ill provided against it, and the futility of their former efforts had discouraged and disheartened the greater number. And, worst of all, they had lost confidence in their officers, and their officers could not trust all of them. Victory, under such circumstances, was impossible. Ducrot, who because of his vow had not returned into Paris since the last sortie, led one army, did nothing signal, and, still to keep his word, stays out. Old Vinoy led another, and some of his volunteers of the National Guard ran away, exposing their comrades of the Line to double disaster. Trochu himself led a third, and for several hours there was a grand artillery duel, and heavy slaughter at certain points from east round to west of the walls. All this while crowds and shoals of people, on foot and in carriages, thronged about the gates, and along the roads, waiting to hear how the battle went. The firing dropped soon after three o'clock, and then the ambulances began to bring in the wounded. And so it grew dusk, but the troops did not return, and there were no tidings of good success. Nothing to comfort them, nothing but sleet and snow

and winter wind, and a frost that increased that night to twelve degrees.

The fight was to be renewed on the morrow, and the soldiers camped in the open, or found shelter in deserted houses. But on the morrow nothing was done, nor on the morrow after that. But several sentinels had died at their posts of the killing cold; and more than twelve hundred men, disabled by frost-bite, were recruits for the hospitals. After that, the generals led the troops back to the city, and braved the disappointment of the people. It was intense and angry. But it was soon quelled, and they took a new lease of hope. Paris is a hard task-mistress to her soldiers, and to herself. There will be battles to fight yet, and keener privations to suffer, before she will give her consent to a capitulation.

Trochu's plan is revealing itself now in spite of his reticence: it can be nothing else, but waiting for help from without. And while he has been waiting, the German guns have come up, and the bombardment of the forts has begun with fury. He ordered the evacuation of Mont Avron after only two days of it, and the Germans took possession. Forts Noisy, Rosny, and Nogent lie now under their hot fire, and if they choose they have cannon that will carry into the city itself. But they wish to let the city alone, if it can be reduced by other means. The citizens are obstinate, and will go to extremity; though the men, as national guards, are not of Spartan valour. Vinoy has cashiered some of his, and Clement Thomas has been rigorous

with others. But there are tens of thousands of linesmen, Breton mobiles and marine infantry, who are not afraid to fight or to die; and, submissive to the passionate voice of Paris, many more of these will die for her. Save her they cannot. It would need a miracle to save her.

LXVIII.

New Year's Day at Versailles.

PARIS fired a salute for the Old Year dying at midnight: the sad Old Year, burdened with such doom to France. The booming of the guns resounded over the snow-white hills to Versailles, where King William and his son were waiting in company to hear the hour strike. It was a most bitter, biting frost; but the soldiers were to and fro till late. There were many supplings together of friends who will keep no more New Year's Nights in this world; and health-drinkings to those at home never to be seen again with the eyes of the flesh. But soldiers think not too much of melancholy, and as they dispersed to their quarters, joyous snatches of German song echoed along the streets of the old French city. Then there was silence. Only the clink of the sentry's armed heel on the stones, and, at intervals, the hiss of a shot in the air.

King William makes himself quite familiar in the Royal Palace, and holds there his ceremonies of state. On this Sunday of the New Year there was Divine service in the chapel, with a military

choir; and after sermon the King had a reception in the splendid Hall of Mirrors, which was attended by all the officers who could be spared from keeping ward over Paris desperate. The King made them a brief gracious speech of thanks for their great work for united Germany; then passing down the line as they stood, he shook hands with each, and wished them all a Happy New Year.

Later in the day there was a royal banquet, when the King thus addressed his guests:

"I raise my glass to welcome the New Year. Upon the past year we look with gratitude; upon that now commencing with hope. Thanks are due to the army which has sped from victory to victory. But my own thanks are due to the German princes present, who belonged to the army before the war, and to those who have since joined it. Our hopes are directed to the crowning of the edifice—an honourable Peace."

The Grand Duke of Baden, in a long speech on behalf of the assembled princes, alluded to German unity as happily achieved. "This day is destined to witness the resurrection with renewed vigour of the venerable German Empire. But your majesty wishes only to assume the Imperial Government when it has thrown its protection round all its members. We, however, regard your Majesty as the supreme head of the German Empire, the crown of which is a guarantee of irrevocable unity." He concluded his speech by a toast to "King William the Victorious."

The New Year felicitation of the princes was also the New Year text of the preachers.

In the old church at Chelles, to a congregation of 2,000 strangers and invaders in the land, a chaplain of the Saxons stood forth on the steps before the altar, and, with an eloquence that vibrated through every soul of them, spoke of the households in Germany where reigned at that hour the hushed silence of great sorrow. Then kindling to his theme, a soldier himself at heart, he went on in martial strain:

"Out there on the slopes across the river, lie beneath the foreign sod many and many of our dear comrades and brethren, never to rise again till the last trumpet sounds. But though each grave-mound is the sad memorial of so much anguish on this New Year's Eve, of broken home-circles, of sorrowing parents, of weeping wives, of fatherless children, yet we know our brothers died in a good cause! They fell for King and Fatherland, and surely they are with God! And the war, sad and solemn episode in our history as it is in one sense, has had yet a glorious result. It has made our German Fatherland not a name but a reality. Already one race, one people, we are now one nation: Saxon, Prussian, Mecklenburger, Badener, Bavarian, we are all now children of the great German Empire."

LXIX.

Brag is a Good Dog—Holdfast is a Better.

January 9.

WHEN I began to write these echoes of events as they passed, I little thought how my ears would come to ache, and my heart too with their painful iteration. I would cease from my task but that I should be sorry for it after. There will be a thousand books written on the war, but not one other, perhaps, from a retired point of view in England, with home-touches for a remembrance of our sympathy in presence of the tragedy of this famous year. So I go on with my simple record.

At Bordeaux the New Year was ushered in by a grand republican demonstration to present addresses to the Government. Fifty thousand people assembled in the square before the prefecture, and out on the balcony came Gambetta, and made them a fine oration in a stentorian voice. He was applauded to the echo. He so thoroughly believes in the ultimate victory of his country over foreign invaders and national vices that he makes his hearers believe it too.

But where is the success he so fluently asserts?

"Our success is well merited for two reasons—firstly, because France has had faith in herself; secondly, because alone in the universe, France to-day represents justice and right." Strange unreason! Where is the justice, where the right?

Then he went on to pray that the memory of the reverses the nation had suffered might be for ever effaced, and to remind the people that it was in this very town of Bordeaux the "Man of Sedan" had uttered the memorable imposture, "The Empire is Peace." They were now undergoing retribution for having borne with his rule twenty years. Imperialism was overthrown at last, and the republic, with its motto of "War to the Death" against invaders, would bring deliverance and salvation to France!

War to the death, indeed: but salvation is far off!

Mezières has capitulated, Rocroi is given up without a blow. There has been another great and terrible battle in the north; both sides claim the victory, and nothing is certain but that the carnage was prodigious. For twelve miles along the high road towards Amiens extended the files of carts and wagons conveying the wounded; and when they reached the city, there was not shelter or tendance for all in the hospitals, so many were they. On the Loire again, about Beaugency, there has been a fight, after which the wounded were days and nights without so much as water. De Chanzy has rallied an army near Le Mans, and any hour we may hear that he is at death-grips with Prince Frederick-Charles, who by no means will let him escape. In the east there have been sanguinary skirmishes—Bourbaki seeks to raise the siege of Belfort, but cannot get near it for von Werder and his auxiliaries. Even Garibaldi, with all his glory,

has not won favour from the gods for the cause he has espoused in France.

The tragedy of Paris is drawing fast towards the last act. It seems almost a cruelty to stand by as a spectator. The bombardment of the forts is being very hotly pressed, and the defences crumble a little every day. The besiegers cannot afford to tarry much longer before the walls. Those incessant armies menacing them round about, though for ever defeated and flying, yet rally again with the vitality of desperation. There is sickness in their own camp, and the immense hordes of prisoners and disabled men on the way to Germany block their communications. Famine and inconceivable misery are the result.

Within the doomed city the authority of Governor Trochu is less and less respected. His plan proves to have been a mere illusion to keep up the hearts of the citizens. His military capacity was suspected from the first, and now his loyalty is revoked in doubt. He has sworn never to capitulate; yet a whisper of capitulation has been heard in the streets, and has provoked tumultuous anger. Paris is cold and hungry, but her proud spirit does not incline to surrender. The mass of the people trust in their generals and soldiers that all will go well if they have patience; but the clamorous few who have kept the jealous watch of rivals know that all is tending to a disaster, to a catastrophe, that will throw the catastrophe of Sedan into the shade.

Trochu has 500,000 soldiers at command. Is

it possible, they ask, that with this enormous mass of men the blockade cannot be broken? There is nothing to be got outside now—all the land is bare; but cannot the Germans be driven away?

“Action, action, action!” shriek Déléscluze, Félix Pyat and others, whose experience has not lain in the way of hard fighting.

I wish Trochu would invite these vociferous braves to march in the front ranks of the next sortie he makes. Though not a man of genius, he is at all events soldier enough to know what men can do, and what they cannot and will not do, having no hope to win. He has put forth a proclamation in defence of himself and his colleagues; and for the satisfaction of those who distrust him, he holds out the prospect of another battle under the walls—which he probably foresees will be as bloody and as bootless as the battles already fought. Does he also foresee that the worst enemies of Paris are not those outside—not the Germans, but the Reds, who vow to make of the city a funeral pyre for the glory of France rather than suffer it to be the scene of a foreign triumph? He says:—

“Citizens and soldiers,—Great efforts are being made to break the bonds of union and mutual confidence to which we owe the fact of seeing Paris, after a hundred days’ siege, upright and resisting the enemy. . . . The disappointments which we have had to encounter, through an extraordinary winter, through fatigue and immeasurable sufferings, are ostentatiously paraded before the public. It is

said that the members of the Government are divided in their views of the great interests which are confided to their care. . . . The army has undergone great trials, . . . it has needed rest; . . . it is, however, preparing for action in concert with the National Guard of Paris, and we shall all do our duty. I declare finally that no dissension has arisen in the councils of the Government. We are closely united in the face of the anguish and perils of the country, and in the thought and hope of deliverance." — Not a word of *expectation*; Trochu has ceased to expect any good, but he will do his duty.

If everybody else would cease to promise more, and strive to do as much, then, though glory is eclipsed, honour might yet be saved. But if the Government, if the citizens, turn coward, and let the Reds get the upper hand of authority, for a single day in Paris, who can tell what that day shall bring forth?

By their deeds we know them. Spain has just chosen her a king of the House of Italy (King Amadeus), and his bringing home has been signalised by the murder of Marshal Prim, the minister and director of the choice of the nation. This is their work—a warning to the law-abiding people of every land that an unscrupulous enemy who does not stick at murder is everywhere conspiring against the peace and safety of society.

The blowing-up of Clerkenwell Prison, to release some members of the confraternity, was a message to us, quite loud and plain enough for those who have

ears to hear. It is high time that the men who believe in God set a guard against the men who believe in none; for they have no guard in themselves to deter from the perpetration of any cruelty, of any iniquity.

LXX.

Step by Step.

January 14.

"If Paris falls, that is not France," says Garibaldi.

True; but affairs look very threatening for France, apart from Paris.

On two successive days of this week, the 10th and 11th, De Chanzy fought at Le Mans against the combined troops of Prince Frederick-Charles and the Duke of Mecklenburg. Gambetta had rushed to his aid from Bordeaux; but neither their moral force nor their strong arm proved a match for the Germans. The battle of both days was stubborn; but the second day was decisive against the French. The slaughter was heavy, and the loss in prisoners the most considerable since the fall of Metz. On the field and in the pursuit 10,000, at the lowest computation, gave themselves up. Of course, they were not seasoned soldiers; they were poor conscripts, scantily fed and clothed, not half drilled, and with no stomach at all for winter-campaigning. They sold themselves for a morsel of bread, for rest, and precious life: *miserable* life, if

they only knew the sharp penury that rules the road to Germany! In beating such feeble forces there is no honour, and it is easy to credit what begins to be said, that the stout Germans are sick of their work. The day after their victory they entered Le Mans; and this morning's news adds Peronne to the list of strong places now in the hands of the invaders.

Whether De Chanzy can retrieve the luck and spirit of the men he has left is more than doubtful. But Paris still looks for him, still depends on him, and devouring her famine-ration of black bread in haggard fortitude, believes that her masters have enough of such provender to let her see February out. But the King of Prussia's patience is waning. His people at home and his soldiers in France weary to have the war over; and so the city itself is to be bombarded. Firing on the forts does not slack the passive courage of the citizens, and it is to be tried what shells falling in their streets and their houses will do. Bismarck sets his face against it, last as first; but there is reason with von Moltke, who urges that Paris has to be taken, that Paris must be conquered; and since the thing is to be done, it were best to do it quickly.

LXXI.

Paris Bombarded.

January 17.

PARIS does, at last, begin to realise the imminence of her peril, to realise that the day of supreme humiliation is not to be averted. A few nights ago a knot of traitors, officers and soldiers, deserted to the enemy; and now the citizens see spies and traitors everywhere. The misery of some makes them an easy prey to violent and seditious counsels; and the Government has very difficult straits before it as the misery becomes universal. There is high testimony to the fortitude of the majority, to their mutual helpfulness and kindness of heart; for sore trouble draws the good together in loving fellowship; but, at the same time, it is the lever that the ill-disposed make use of to raise discontent and commotion. The devout go to prayers in the churches all day long; but there are those who make a mock at prayers, and anticipate the reign of anarchy, when they will throw down the altars, and set up their barricades. To hear them talk, they might be the most valiant of men; but it is not known that they have proved their metal or done any doughty deeds. Rather the reverse is suspected.

The people endure, but they suffer horribly. Not only from wintry cold and privation, but from want of rest and sleep. The bombardment of the forts is terrible, especially at night. Those who

were witnesses of the last days of Sebastopol say these last days of Paris are worse. The falling shells have raised fire already in several quarters. The barracks of Montrouge and Issy are destroyed, and some parts of Paris are quite deserted by their inhabitants, who have been allowed to take refuge in the empty houses of emigrants who left before the siege. M. Jules Favre protests against the attack on the city, and accuses the Prussians of wantonly directing their fire against the hospitals, ambulances, schools, churches, and prisons, for the purpose of inspiring the civil population with terror. It is true that five little children were killed in their beds one night, and women have been killed; but these pitiful events are not new in the war. Remember Strasbourg. The accusation is as random as the shells, which are no respecters of persons. If the Prussians had the choice of what they would hit, I doubt not that women and children would go scatheless, and that there would be a happy despatch of a few riotous Reds, who keep up the clamour of resistance, but lend it no hand when it comes to fighting the enemy.

The real soldiers who do the work owe these blatant heroes no love. On the night of the 13th there were three sorties out of Paris, directed against the Prussian positions at Le Bourget, Meudon, and Clamart. What object they had, unless to appease the loud demands for more vigour, of a few, which excite the anxious distrust of many, does not appear. They were all repulsed; were a mere waste of life; and that some of the men knew they were

being led to useless slaughter was evidenced by the fact of their refusing to advance, even when adjured by their officers, for the love of God, to come on. This the Prussians heard, and at their first volley the French ran away. A soldier who knows that there is absolutely nothing to be got by dying is excusable if he prefer to live to fight another day. In fact, the best men in the army of Paris have lost the tenacity of hope; if they ever quit themselves well in her defence again, it will be in the proud tenacity of duty and despair.

LXXII.

"Hail, Cæsar!"

January 24.

It is accomplished, the greatest political event of the century. France is fallen, fallen from her proud estate, and the German Empire rises again on her ruins. King William of Prussia is proclaimed Emperor—the scene of his proclamation the Grand Gallery of Versailles. Now, indeed, are "all the glories of France" avenged!

They say that the spectacle was very imposing, very impressive. The German standards were grouped at one end of the gallery, and in the midst an altar was set. There, in the presence of a great multitude of princes, courtiers, ministers, and soldiers out of every tribe of the Fatherland, King William thanked his God, and all the people said Amen. Loud clarions and trumpets, and the sound of many voices swelled high in praise of the Eternal; and a

preacher ascribed the victory to the Lord, and admonished the King that he whom the Lord sets to rule over men must be just.

After sermon the King and the princes retired from the altar, and stood under the trophy of flags, and the King spoke:

"I accept for myself and my successors the title of Emperor of Germany, by restoring the old German Empire. I hope that I shall succeed in fulfilling, to the welfare of Germany, the duties that belong to the dignity of Emperor."

Then all the princes and great lords and captains, and all the soldiers, shouted: "God save the Emperor!" the Emperor's son leading the sonorous cheer, and thousands and tens of thousands of echoes repeating it from the battle-fields all the land of France over!

In the land of Germany they are lighting their lamps and singing for joy, and reading a new proclamation of peace and good-will in the streets:

"We, William, by God's grace, King of Prussia, hereby announce that the German princes and free towns having addressed to us a unanimous call to renew and undertake with the re-establishment of the German Empire the dignity of Emperor, which now for sixty years has been in abeyance, and the requisite provisions having been inserted in the constitution of the German Confederation, we regard it as a duty we owe to the entire Fatherland to comply with this call of the united German princes and free towns, and to accept the dignity of Emperor.

"Accordingly, we and our successors to the Crown of Prussia henceforth shall use the Imperial title in all our relations and affairs of the German Empire; and we hope to God that it may be vouchsafed to the German nation to lead the Fatherland on to a blessed future under the auspices of its ancient splendour. We undertake the Imperial dignity, conscious of the duty to protect with German loyalty the rights of the Empire and its members, to preserve peace, to maintain the independence of Germany, and to strengthen the power of the people. We accept it in the hope that it will be granted to the German people to enjoy in lasting peace the reward of its arduous and heroic struggles within boundaries which will give to the Fatherland that security against renewed French attacks which it has lacked for centuries.

"May God grant to us and our successors to the Imperial Crown, that we may be the defenders of the German Empire at all times, not in martial conquests, but in works of peace, in the sphere of national prosperity, freedom, and civilisation."

To his devoted soldiers in their bivouacs that piercing winter day, the victorious sovereign sent his thanks, and the news of his honour.

"On this day, memorable for me and my house, I take, with the consent of the German princes and the adhesion of all the German people, in addition to my rank as King of Prussia, that of German Emperor. Your bravery and endurance, which I again recognise to the fullest extent, has hastened the work of the unification of Germany, a result which

you have achieved at the expenditure of blood and lives. Let it always be remembered that the feeling of mutual friendship, bravery, and obedience rendered the army great and victorious. Maintain this feeling, then will the Fatherland always regard you with pride as to-day, and you will always remain its strong arm."

LXXIII.

*In Extremis.**January 25.*

WHEN this war is over the tyrants of both armies will be able to boast that men's lives were made of no account, and that blood was poured out like water: on the German side to compel victory; on the French to save a shred of honour when all else was lost. Would to God there were an end of it!

Bourbaki's enterprise in the east has failed utterly; Faidherbe in the north has sustained a crushing defeat; it is all over with De Chanzy and the Army of the Loire. De Chanzy will not deliver Paris now, and Paris knows that her day of expectation is past.

In vain has Gambetta worn himself out, running from camp to camp to raise the courage of the soldiers; in vain does he shriek to the populace who go out to meet him, that "Eternal war is better than mutilation!" All the gratitude that he gets for his pains is the fierce, wailing accusation that he, and such as he, are bleeding France to death.

Everywhere the people are weary, angered, and afraid. The dead and wounded lie by thousands in their frozen fields; fugitives are for ever flying, and the enemy for ever in pursuit.

Provincial France is ready to yield, but the pride of Paris dies very hard. The possibility of a capitulation is not yet officially recognised, though the last military effort has been made, and has had no result. For some time back there has been great difficulty in grinding corn enough to give the people daily bread, because the besiegers have taken the mills across the Marne. The bread they have is bitter, pasty, and gritty, and hardly enough to keep body and soul together; but before their famished eyes and hopeful imaginations dances a mirage of good things which they believe the Government to be holding back to the last. They execrate the barbarism of the Prussians for the shell-fire that falls upon the city, and kills a few victims (a very few in proportion to the many who are dying of hunger, and of disease hunger-bred); but it is nothing to what may have to be endured if their stubborn spirit refuse to bend, or if the mercy of the Germans yield to impatience. They have the power but not the will to harm Paris more, for they know that the hour of their triumph cannot be far off. Fuel is spent, and food is almost spent, and excitement, distrust, and distress are rising fast beyond control. There is a cry amongst the strangers to be let out before the closing scene; but Bismarck sternly answers that they have had their opportunity before, and as they were not pleased to take it, they

must now wait for the end. Bismarck will forego nothing that can expedite it.

There was a great sortie on the 19th, an effort of despair; there cannot be another. The story of it is simply heartrending. Trochu spent the night before at Mont Valérien; Ducrot, Vinoy, and other competent officers being with him, and 100,000 men, provided with four days' rations, were to march in the morning. Ducrot and his troops were astir at three o'clock, and all were on the move by six; but a thick, freezing fog enveloped the world; there were delays, accidents, and misadventures; and underlying all there was the discouragement that arises from habitual defeat. When it came to the push, the haggard soldiers could not stand it. The fire from the forts never ceased, and they had three hundred cannon with them to force their way; but the Prussians, safe in their trenches, laughed at their abortive efforts, and with their artillery and musketry swept the ground they tried to gain as with a besom. The Emperor and "Fritz" and all Versailles were up. Vinoy at Montretout made very hard fighting till past sunset; but by that hour the French were elsewhere repulsed, and Vinoy's troops had won nothing. They had died well, and no more need be told; the tale sickens in the repetition.

That night Trochu sent to ask for an armistice of forty-eight hours to bury the dead. It was refused, but help was given to save the wounded. Three deep went the files of litters into Paris, and still the air throbbed with the thunder of cannon. About the gates waited the women, wives of the

citizen-soldiers, to receive their men, maimed and agonised; women of all classes, high and low, rich and poor.

Through this terror and fury and gloom came flying home to Paris a carrier-pigeon; no messenger of peace or hope, but a messenger that all was lost upon the Loire. When Trochu heard it, he gave up the idea of any more fighting, and gradually withdrew the troops into Paris. By the evening of the 21st all the soldiers were within the fortifications. And the Committee of the Defence called a council of citizens and military officers to consider, What next?

LXXIV.

A Blunder—Worse than a Crime.

WHAT next? Even while the council was sitting in dismal deliberation, the ominous sound of the tocsin was heard in Belleville, with a mustering of its national guards, to march to Mazas to release Flourens and his friends, in prison there since October.

The next event after that was a demonstration in front of the Hôtel de Ville, women and children mixed with the men, for idleness and curiosity more than for mischief. The insurgent national guards had promised to meet there, and the populace came out to see. By-and-by a company of one hundred and fifty appeared, armed and carrying the red flag. "*Vive la Commune!*" was their cry, and "Down with

Trochu!" A shot was fired, no one could tell whence; and instantly a volley was poured into the crowd, from the steps of the town-hall, by two files of soldiers, until that moment concealed behind the great doors. The harmless folk ran shrieking; the insurgents ran, and stood to return the fire, and ran again, and when the scrimmage was over there were a dozen poor wounded souls for the litter-bearers to pick up, two of them women.

General Clement Thomas had issued a proclamation to the National Guard in the morning, denouncing the handful of insurgents who had broken open Mazas and set Flourens at liberty the night before; and now again he exhorted his men who were present, in the name of the public good, to repress the seditious attempts at insurrection made by a few of their number in favour of the commune.

Vinoy appeared on the scene with resolution to quell any popular fray, and the turbulent spirits were once more cowed and defeated. But innocent blood has been shed, and such blood waters terrible seed. What necessity was there for that random volley, without warning to the gaping people to begone? The peril was neither so imminent nor so immense, but that the Mayor of Paris might have read the riot act a score of times. But perhaps he has no riot act to read. Government by massacre seems a short way with the mob for the moment, but sure am I that it is the longest way about if the end of government be the common-weal.

The advocates of the commune, and would-be

masters of Paris, have harangued obtrusively, ever since the defence became doubtful, against the slow counsels of the men in power, and now they rage at the prospect of surrender. The men in power are not equal to the dark disastrous crisis, but neither are the men who would displace them. Obscurity is nothing, the greatest men have come out of obscurity; but the leaders of the commune are known by their former failures. It is said they have ready a scheme of government with Ledru-Rollin at its head, a list of ministers unused to toils of state, and of generals unbiassed by any knowledge of the rules of war.

To "leave kingly cares to kingly men" is sound advice; but where now is the kingly man who shall rescue France out of the deep pit of misery into which she is fallen? For a brief space there seemed a chance that the sons of Louis Philippe might have a day again. They are men of character and men of courage and ability; and since they were sent into exile princes and people too have learnt and forgotten many things. But there is as much jealousy of rivals amongst republicans as amongst imperialists; and amongst the extreme republicans a looming notion that France had better perish than be saved by any but themselves.

This goes on to the roar of the Prussian cannon. It is known at Versailles that there is disorder in Paris, and that any day, any hour, may see the commissioners of the Government riding out to treat of surrender.

Trochu, loyal, cautious man, has done his ut-

most, and can do no more. His oath never to capitulate stands in the way. Therefore he has resigned his title and functions as Governor of Paris, and the chief command of the army is re-mitted to Vinoy.

LXXV.

"Call off the Dogs.

January 31.

PARIS is on her knees, a lean, haggard woman, hunted to the death; three gaunt hounds gape at her throat: Fire, Sword, and Famine. The German Emperor looks on with a *rusé* twinkle in his eyes; von Moltke, ruthless as fate, watches her, leaning on his sword; and Bismarck, from his impassive face, might be ruminating how it was said of old time, "The dominion that is founded in blood shall not stand."

Thus "Punch" writes history in pictures; very good, true history.

The weather is beautiful. Paris is quiet, and Paris is capitulating. Her sufferings have been very great, and they are not yet over. But her patience endures. None of the fabulous dainties that the Government was supposed to be holding in reserve have been brought forth, and the most urgent needs of the city are being supplied at this moment from the stores of the German armies. M. Jules Favre himself is reported to have dined with Bismarck, and to have visibly enjoyed his dinner, notwithstanding that his mission was to ask for terms of

surrender. Here again, as at Metz, the first act of the Germans was to feed their enemies. They sent in six million rations at once, and a few peasants have entered with some lean cows and calves, but what are these in a city of two thousand thousand starving souls? The broken railways will retard for several days yet the sending forward of provisions, and the pinch for food must become worse before relief can arrive. There was a week's miscalculation about the bread—such bread as it is, mixed of peas, starch, and chopped hay; and the portion is now so scanty that life can barely be sustained upon it. In some quarters two days elapse between the distributions of food. The want of fuel increases the pining wretchedness, and the mortality is ever more and more. But the poor are sunk too low to be clamorous.

The sad, gloomy dejection of all ranks of people is very marked. The iron eats into their souls. And yet, underlying all the anger, bitterness, and shame, there appears to be a sense of relief with the majority that the long agony of the siege is over, and that the end is no worse. For humanity's sake we rejoice that Paris takes her fall less furiously to heart than she expected. It is a mercy to be spared the horrible carnage of a sortie *en masse* such as was threatened for the catastrophe, to be spared any fighting at Rochefort's barricades, and the startling illumination of the world by Paris on fire. Vinoy, in the exercise of his new authority, has shut up the mischievous Jacobin clubs, a measure of wise precaution. He pledges himself to

keep the peaceable citizens in safety, if they will set the example of order and obedience; and further he pledges himself not to stand on ceremony with the Reds, if they threaten to become troublesome. The peaceable citizens resign themselves to circumstances over which they have no control, and are quite willing to rely on the promises of the Government. With forethought and courage it may possibly avert revolt; but it cannot be concealed that serious peril lurks in the counsels of the knot of resolute, fanatical communists who have twice already set the city in an uproar. Flourens is in prison again; but others more violent are at liberty.

It was last Thursday at midnight when the bombardment ceased from the Prussian lines. O the welcome silence! The capitulation was signed on Saturday between Jules Favre and Bismarck. The terms are considered moderate: an armistice of three weeks by land and sea for the election and meeting of a National Assembly at Bordeaux, to decide on the primary question of War or Peace. Paris to continue invested, and the detached forts to be occupied by the Germans; to pay a fine of £8,000,000 sterling, and all her material of war to pass to the enemy. The troops of the Line and the Mobiles to lay down their arms, and be interned in the city as prisoners of war. Against Bismarck's judgment the National Guard are to keep their arms, on the plea of preserving order—a curious plea considering that they are generally the first to break order, and that the Belleville battalions rose against the Govern-

ment less than a month ago. Perhaps those battalions are excepted. Vinoy is allowed a few regular soldiers as auxiliaries in case of accidents.

Paris is of course to re-victual herself, and for this her friends are busy on all sides. Flocks and herds and vast tribute of flour wait only for the opening of the roads. Our Queen's stores and people are offered for the work, and the city of London is active with the foremost in despatching succour to the hungry people. They cannot be too quick; for Paris now only exists from day to day, from hour to hour, and the Germans have said they can do no more to help her.

LXXVI.

"Sublime Folly."

February 6.

THE news of the capitulation of Paris and of the armistice has raised vehement remonstrance at Lyons, Marseilles, and Bordeaux. Gambetta unable for a day to utter his overwhelming feelings, has since put forth a proclamation, which is one of the "sublime follies" that the French forgive themselves for with proud complacency. But it will be a wonder if it do no mischief.

"Citizens,—The enemy has just inflicted upon France the most cruel injury that she has had to endure in this accursed war. . . . Paris the impregnable, vanquished by famine, unable any longer to hold in respect the German hordes, has succumbed. The forts have been surrendered. The

city remains intact, wresting by her moral grandeur this last homage from the barbarians. . . . By her heroic sacrifices during five months of privation and suffering, she has given France time to collect herself, to form armies, young indeed, but strong and determined. . . . Thanks to Paris, we hold in our hands all that is necessary to avenge her, and deliver the country. . . . But something even more sinister than the fall of Paris has come upon us. . . . Unknown to us an armistice has been signed, which imposes on us the obligation of remaining inactive for three weeks, in order to convoke a National Assembly. . . . We must act, and come what may, upset the perfidious calculations of the enemies of France. . . . Prussia hopes that the National Assembly, meeting while the dreadful impression of the fall of Paris prevails, will be necessarily trembling, and ready to accept a shameful peace. . . . It rests with us to defeat these calculations. . . . Let us employ these three weeks in pushing on with more ardour than ever the organisation of war. . . . Instead of an assembly of cowardly reactionists, which the invader expects, let us summon an assembly that shall be truly national and republican, desirous of peace if peace will leave us the honour, the rank, and the integrity of our country, but ready to vote for war rather than to consent to the assassination of France. . . . Let us remember our fathers, who bequeathed to us France whole and indivisible. . . . We must expel the foreigner. To this sacred object we must devote our hearts, our wills, our lives. We must have neither passions nor weaknesses. Let us

close our ranks about the republic, and let us swear, as free men, to defend France against all and every one. To arms!"

What is the answer of inexorable fate to this wild adjuration? That Bourbaki's army, to the number of 85,000 men, in most deplorable plight, has passed into Switzerland to avoid capture, and that Bourbaki, in despair, has all but killed himself. Whatever news reaches us brings the same burden of ruin, defeat and death. Gambetta feels an intolerable sense of shame in seeing France beaten into submission. A select few feel with him, but the military situation in the provinces appears as hopeless as in the capital itself. The nation at large is too exhausted to be fully sensible of the humiliation that will by-and-by sting her to the quick. Well if it do not for long years break the spring of her proud spirit, dishearten her from rising out of the slough of her despondency, and lay her open to the vile tyrannies of the basest of her people. Peace, if it come, will bring no healing on its wings to her sore wound.

And will peace come? Even now there is a doubt of it. The armistice is extended, but it is no secret that the Uhlans are studying their maps of the south of France, and that large bodies of soldiers have received their routes, and will want nothing but their orders to march if the Assembly refuse to purchase peace at the German Emperor's terms.

What the price of peace is to be we do not know, but the rumours are all extravagant. The war

has been a reckless game for double-or-quits since Sedan, and it is to be feared that Germany will exact her winnings in full, though it cost France all that makes her life dear to her. Gambetta in his furious pride and patriotic wilfulness is her faithful representative.

Sharp misery is still the lot of Paris. There is neither egress nor ingress without a Prussian pass, and we have not yet heard that any of the supplies from England have been got into the famished city. And if not from England, then not from elsewhere; for the road by Dieppe is the only road that is clear. The elections are in progress, but no one seems to care for the elections. For thinking of what they shall eat to-day, no one can think of how they shall be governed to-morrow. Yet next to life that is now the momentous question.

Since issuing his proclamation, Gambetta, unable in his conscience to agree with his colleagues, has retired from the Government, to be free to oppose their peace-policy in the Assembly. Just before, he had put forth a decree to ostracise the Bonapartists, as the Orleanists were ostracised long ago. But this decree was speedily revoked on a declaration from Bismarck, that the Assembly must be freely elected, and without the exclusion of men of any party, or he will not recognise its authority. This announcement of universal liberty of choice will bring up from all political points of the compass sanguine competitors for the task of guiding France out of her chaos of calamities. The time is very critical. If an able and generous hand be not given her to

grasp the reins of power, the Red Spectre will assuredly make a clutch for them. Men in high places dare not whisper this, nor is it mooted in the public prints; but it is common talk with the 'multitude, who talk of what they fear.

LXXVII.

Political Programmes.

February 17.

WE are a happy nation. If we have not much change or variety in our annals, we may thank God for the bliss of a "sweet continuance."

A week ago, in sunshine and fine weather, with the ringing of bells, with salvoes of artillery, and cheers of myriads of her subjects, our good Queen Victoria went in state to open Parliament. Dis-crowned and unrobed of royal pomp, as it graces her majesty to be since she is a widow, she met her faithful Lords and Commons, and heard her Chancellor read the speech which the nation looks for as the programme in dim perspective of what the political year is to bring forth.

Her majesty had no surprises for her people. We expected none. The cloud in the East is clearing off. The Russian bear is to be eased of his most galling chains. The cloud in the West was only a temporary shadow between friends. We are heartily grieved at the devastation of France. We look with proper awe on the resurrection of the German Empire. Our own dominions all round the world are in peace and prosperity. The British navy

will so maintain them, being more than a match for all the navies afloat. The British army is to be improved. The electoral system is to be purged of abuses. Sanitary-laws, navigation-laws, game-laws, test-acts, and other weighty matters, social and ecclesiastical, will give work enough and to spare to the legislative powers; but with God's blessing on their endeavours, they will do their duty to their Sovereign and to the nation, and keep us moving safely and gently on in the paths of progress.

For minds so lost to the delicious sense of peace and quietness as to think this home-programme dull and uninteresting, there is still likely to be exciting diversion in the sensational romance of revolution abroad.

The wolf is driven away from most doors in Paris, and those who have money to buy have now enough to eat; to those who have no money charity ministers what relief it can, but there will be for many a long day thousands of miserables who will want and have nothing. The city is far from easy within itself, as it meditates on what may be passing at Bordeaux. The national guards are insolent; the soldiers of the line are in ill-humour. The police in many secret repositories have brought to light bombs filled with petroleum, fulminating mercury, and all manner of fiery mischief. The orderly citizens want trade and confidence to return with peace. But their hearts misgive them sorely for what may next ensue amongst the populace, who are advocates to a man for war to the last gasp.

If violent troubles ensue let the orderly citizens

consider how little they did to avert them. They are blindly remiss in their public duty, well-warned as they are of danger. There are 550,000 registered electors in Paris. Of these it is computed that 300,000 have abstained from voting. And what is the consequence? The consequence is that the red republicans have had entirely their own way, and Paris sends none but men of their opinions to represent her in the National Assembly: to wit, Louis Blanc, Victor Hugo, Garibaldi, Gambetta, Rochefort, Déléscluze, Pyat, Lockroy, Floquet, Milliére, Tolain, and Malon.

Here is the programme of one of these members for Paris, Félix Pyat, editor of the *Vengeur*: "If I were the sovereign people I would order the exile of the several princes, and if exile did not suffice, their death. I would seize as national property that of all traitors who are plotting for a king. I would decree the *levée en masse*. . . . I would order war to the death as the surest means of terminating the struggle. . . . I would carry the revolution into the Cevennes. . . . I would impeach the whole of the Government, generals and lawyers, Trochu, Favre, and Gambetta." This sketch of a policy does not promise pleasantly for the friends of peace in Paris. But men who have not courage to be free deserve to fall under the yoke of tyrants.

The Assembly met on the 12th, at Bordeaux, and, as was anticipated, the vast majority of the Chamber is with the conservative or country party, friends of the House of Orleans, and of the elder

monarchy. The imperialists are weak in numbers, but staunch to their master. Garibaldi refused to take his seat. His place, brave, spotless soldier, is not in the confused arena of French politics. He can only fight. And the imminent risk to-day is how France shall leave off fighting, continue at unity within herself, and secure an honourable peace. He will be a statesman, indeed, who shall prove himself able to combine all three.

Notwithstanding the inglorious difficulties of the situation every faction bids hard for sovereign sway. We have heard Gambetta's proclamation, inspired by the lofty fanaticism that prefers national death to shameful decadence; and we have heard Félix Pyat's appeal for popularity to the worst passions of the mob. In absolute contrast to these is the cool manifesto of the Duke d'Aumale, who, comparing the France of to-day with the France of his father, is struck with the advantages of a constitutional monarchy, but finds nothing in his thoughts or sentiments to sever him from her service under a republic, if a republic be her desire. The Count de Chambord is willing to renounce his solitude, and take on him painful cares of state, if France, repentant of her wild revolutionary days, will accept him as her King by right Divine. And lastly, Napoleon III., from his fair prison at Wilhelmshöhe, reminds France that he is her only lawful fountain of honour, her sovereign by will of the people, thrice acclaimed, and never reversed. Thus he speaks:

"Betrayed by fortune, I have preserved since my

captivity that profound silence which is misfortune's mourning. . . . When I was compelled to constitute myself a prisoner I could not treat for peace. . . . I left to the Government of the Regent the duty of deciding whether the interests of the nation required a continuation of the struggle. . . . But while attention was fixed on the enemy an insurrection broke out in Paris. . . . A government installed itself by surprise in the Hôtel de Ville, and the empire was overthrown. . . . I exclaimed, 'What matter the dynasty if the country can be saved!' and I desired the success of the National Defence. Now that the capital has succumbed, that all reasonable chance of victory has disappeared, it is time to ask for an account from those who have usurped power of the blood shed without necessity, the ruin heaped up without reason, the resources of the country squandered without control. The nation cannot long obey those who have no right to command. . . . There is but one Government which has issued from the national sovereignty, which has the strength to heal your wounds, to re-open your hearts to hope . . . to bring back industry, concord, and peace to the bosom of the country.—NAPOLÉON."

LXXVIII.

Peace!

March 8.

"PEACE brings Wealth, Wealth brings Pride, Pride brings War, War brings Poverty, Poverty brings Humility, Humility brings Peace."

This is the moral that the burghers of Berlin have written upon the front of their Town-Hall, the moral for the victorious nation. "Peace brings Penance," is the further moral for the conquered nation. A most severe penance. Justice without mercy is now the law for France, who, in her day of power, showed no mercy. And might without magnanimity is the law for Germany.

Only to see how time brings round its revenges! Events are more logical often than our reason. I am not thinking how Prussia has meted to France the hard measure that once France meted to her, though that is true. I am thinking of M. Thiers. What man more than he is responsible for the legend of the Great Napoleon? What man more than he has upheld the false worship of glory in which France has been ever too prone to put her trust? It has brought her to dismal ruin at last; and upon him as chief of the executive government, elected by the National Assembly at Bordeaux, it has fallen to accept in her name the most signal humiliation that ever nation underwent, to sign the terms of a peace by which she is deposed from her great place in Europe, and shorn of her strength, her pride, and her riches.

The choice lay between the prosecution of the hopeless war and the forfeiture of Alsace with Strasbourg, and half Lorraine with Metz and Thionville: the strongholds whence France has sallied so often to plunder the German Rhine. Besides this loss of her territory and her fortresses, Bismarck required an indemnity of £200,000,000 sterling to cover the cost of the invasion, and the maintenance of the German armies, who will occupy Champagne for three years until the uttermost farthing of it is paid. And for her own particular penance, to vain and blustering Paris, he insisted on a three days' tenure of her beautiful playground, from the Arc-de-l'Étoile to the Place de la Concorde by 40,000 German soldiers.

To these cruel terms Thiers bowed. The majority of the National Assembly confirmed his act. There were over a hundred dissentients who voted to fight on rather than grant the conquerors' demands. But the majority had their way. The preliminaries of peace were signed. And then came the crucial test of persuading Paris to kiss the rod of her chastisement, and not by an outburst of impotent fury to turn the rod into a scourge of fire.

The friends of order would have done their penance in silence; but the workmen of Belleville and Montmartre, led by emissaries of the International League of Revolution, began to demonstrate with flags, caps of liberty, and infinite noise. Suddenly, in a mob of these idle thousands assembled on the Place de la Bastille, appeared the Red Spectre, and fleshed its horrible teeth by wor-

rying to death a luckless mortal, branded on some random accusation as a spy. From that hour the murderous terror has haunted the eyes of the quiet citizens. They go in bodily fear, and shirk both duty and danger.

One night the tocsin rang, drums beat to arms, and the insurgent national guards ran together to pillage the magazines of ammunition. In vain Clement Thomas appealed to them to keep the public peace. What peace could there be with the walls of Paris crying out that she was surrendered; that the barbarians would not forego the triumph of treading her streets, and gazing on her palaces?

Vinoy had 12,000 soldiers to preserve order. There were soon 30,000 national guards in arms to excite commotion. The anxious distress of the Government became very serious; for the insurgents swore that they would raise all Paris to resist the entrance of the enemy within her gates. So loud and menacing were their oaths, -so violent their show of determination, that Jules Favre went to Bismarck, and talked of bombs, beseeching him to forego the final act of retaliation lest worse should come of it. But Bismarck was not afraid; and bombs or no bombs, he said, his soldiers must have their treat; they had fought well and deserved their holiday. He, however, consented to defer the holiday for forty-eight hours, to give mob-Paris time to re-consider itself, and to temper its arrogance with discretion.

The delay sufficed. When the invisible powers

who guided the rioters knew that come the Germans must and would, they put by their guns, and slaked their wrath by muttering curses and revenge. Then they drew a cordon round the quarter beyond which the Germans were not to go, veiled in crape the faces of the colossal statues representing the famous cities of France that stand about the Place de la Concorde, and commanded that all the people should keep within their houses.

It was a day of mourning that none desired to affront. The 1st of March, and the weather splendid. The bivouac-fires of the Germans smoked in the sun. They sang, they rejoiced, they even danced, in their glee. The war was over, and their next move would be home, home, home to their own country! On the racecourse of Longchamps the Emperor-King and his son "Fritz" reviewed their armies; and the great Bismarck, with a cigar in his mouth, rode down to the Arc-de-l'Étoile, contemplated the shining city, and rode back again.

On the third day, with a vast victorious shouting, away marched the soldiers along the grand avenue, the Paris-mob flowing after, cowardly-defiant. Not a German dared they handle; but when the Germans were well away, they found a victim for their dastard spite in a poor waif of a woman who had been amongst them, and her they worried to rags like the spy of the Place de la Bastille. And there was an end for the day in the true fashion of Red Paris.

LXXIX.

"Day of the People's Justice."

JUSTICE, forsooth! Is the name of Justice to be parodied in France like the name of Liberty?

There is none of that brusque common courage in Frenchmen that finds such apt expression amongst the English of all ranks in a clenched fist, a knitted brow, and a word between the teeth: "I'll take good care you don't!" Grand things for public peace.

One evening not many years ago I was walking up the Champs Elysées with a friend, just at the hour when the workmen were leaving work at the buildings then in course of construction in that splendid quarter. There must have been thousands of them; alert, light men, of average stature, in blue linen smocks, with eager lean faces, and no air of being jaded by their summer day's labour.

"These are the men of whom the Emperor is afraid," said my companion; and we stepped off the pavement down which they were pouring in a swift, steady rush.

I remember saying that it would take two of them to make a British navy; and a force of special constables with British staves, and right and authority on their side would find no difficulty in dealing with them.

But staves are not in the mode of Paris; these men are national guards themselves, and each

popular uprising puts arms into their hands. The 4th of September equipped them to be masters. How sorry Jules Favre must be that he did not let Bismarck carry off every gun and ounce of powder in Paris! These agile little men are in such frantic haste to kill, so cruel and monstrous in their revenges. That is now looming close overhead which has been foreseen with fear and trembling from the beginning. A minority in the capital, dragooned by no one knows what commanders, is in revolt against the Assembly; and a rival government has established itself in the Hôtel de Ville, and issues its orders in the name of the Central Committee of the National Guard.

The echoes of the turmoil grow confused and confusing; but this echo is sharp and distinct. Day of justice, do they call it? Nay, but a day of murder, of cowardly, cruel murder!

It was the 18th of March. Hardly had the Paris-mob seen the back of the last German when the trouble began. The Assembly, instead of boldly assuming its place in the capital, stayed outside at Versailles; and the old republican general Clement Thomas was superseded in his place of chief of the National Guard by General de Paladine. With a monarchical Assembly at Versailles and an Orleanist officer in command of the popular forces, even moderate men began vehemently to distrust the government of M. Thiers. The democratic journals practised on this distrust, and raised a cry that the republic was in danger. When an edict was promulgated bidding the national guards return

their guns to the arsenals suspicion came to a crisis, and the knot of obscure conspirators who are identified as the Central Committee issued counter-orders to the men of Montmartre and Belleville to take the guns belonging to their battalions, and park them on the heights commanding the city.

The Government appealed to the insurgents twice in vain by proclamation; then it suppressed the most seditious journals; then it tried a parley. The workmen did not seem obstinate to drive the quarrel to extremity, and it was understood that the guns would be given up. But behind the workmen are the revolutionary agents of the International Society, and probably a few bad fellows with private grudges and ambitions of their own to gratify. Still it is possible that the guns might have been taken out of harm's way if the Government had any real confidence in itself. But it is weak and vacillating, like a government not sure of its own honourable purposes; and while it temporised the malicious devil at the ear of the people incited a few to the commission of one of those desperate acts for which there is neither remedy nor forgiveness, and which ever signalise the commencement of violent civil commotions in Paris.

Early on the morning of this dishonoured day, General Lecomte and the 88th regiment of the line were despatched to Montmartre to take peaceful possession of the artillery parked on the hill if they could, but, at all hazards, to bring it away. They went, it appears, without horses enough; and the men had no good-will for the duty. The conclu-

sion of the matter was an angry gathering of the populace, a complete break-up of discipline amongst the troops, their fraternisation with some insurgent guards, and the capture of the general.

Later in the day, in the same quarter, there was collected an immense multitude, mixed of ragamuffins, workmen, women, and soldiers, to whom an orator was expounding how General Lecomte had twice that morning ordered his troops to fire upon the people. An old gentleman in the crowd spoke up, and said that General Lecomte was right—he obeyed his orders. The venturesome brave old man was in plain clothes, but the bystanders recognised him as Clement Thomas; and an evil-minded miscreant, such as there are too many loose in Paris, viciously proposed to hale him off to the same place as his friend Lecomte. There wanted but the word to set the mob on murder. The general was hustled away to a small house in a garden on the top of Montmartre, where Lecomte had been several hours in durance; and after a mockery of trial they were taken out together into the garden, where a file of assassins awaited them, placed with their backs to the wall, and barbarously shot to death.

When the Government heard of this portentous deed, out it came with a proclamation exhorting loyal Paris to look to herself. "The Government appeals to you to defend your city. . . . Some frenzied men, commanded by unknown chiefs, direct against Paris the guns saved from the Prussians. . . . Will you suffer it? Will you, under

the eyes of the strangers ready to profit by our discord, abandon Paris to sedition? If you do not extinguish it in the germ, the republic and France will be ruined for ever. Their destiny is in your hands. The Government desires that you should energetically maintain the law; . . . gather round your leaders. It is the only means of escaping ruin and the domination of the foreigner."

The mild, inoffensive citizens who had forborne to vote at the elections for the Assembly, lest they should contradict the wilful will of the Reds, were painfully amazed by this sudden discharge of the burden of Paris on their prudent shoulders. And sorely bewildered too; for when they had read, and began to gaze about for the leaders they were admonished to follow, there were no leaders in sight. It must have felt like a very bad joke indeed, when they discovered that the chief of the Government, his colleagues, and his underlings had effected a safe retreat upon Versailles; and that Vinoy and the soldiers who were to be trusted had gone after them, all under cover of the night. But so it was, and many obedient citizens got ready on the instant to gather to them. There were, however, many more whose circumstances withheld them from imitating this noble policy of retreat in the face of danger, and these continue bound to the disquieted, unhappy city.

According to the latest news, the deputies and the mayors are trying to govern the capital, abandoned of its ostensible rulers, and to find out some way of conciliation before the popular revolt

runs into furious civil war. But they also have the secret men of the Central Committee against them—a danger the more perplexing because it is not defined. And from the three instances of murder by the mob, it is but too plain that the bloodhounds who hunt with the Red Spectre are unkennelled.

The peril is very imminent; so imminent that some of the Prussians who had retired from before the city have returned to St. Denis; and Bismarck has intimated to Thiers that if he cannot arrest the plague quickly, he will do it for him.

LXXX.

Civil War.

April 6.

FRANCE has not yet sounded the abyss of her misery. Civil war has begun, and the exodus from Paris for fear of the red revolution threatens to double the exodus before the siege. The Orleans princes have withdrawn from the fray, and have returned to England. The Emperor Napoleon also has arrived, and is safe at Chiselhurst. When he landed at Dover, where the Empress met him, the idle folk who went out to see cheered them. What for? "For want of thought," says Dinah.

It needs some skill and patience in listening, to separate true echoes from false rumours at this moment, the air is so full of both. But these are what I hear.

The day after the bold retreat to Versailles, M. Thiers issued a mandate to the country at large that his was the only government, and he began to get a great army together, prisoners from Germany, and others. When the well-disposed inhabitants of Paris had time to collect their scattered faculties, they failed to discover any adequate excuse for those who had left the city in the lurch. Not a tithe of the populace were mad. There were 20,000 national guards, who adhered to the established authorities, and who desired no better than to help in putting down the revolt of Montmartre and Belleville. But instead of encouragement from the Government, they received an order to disband themselves, and advice to come away from the city, and bring all they valued with them.

The Red members for Paris had seceded from the Assembly, but Louis Blanc and others, backed by the general approval of the citizens, went to Versailles to propose a scheme of conciliation. The chief article of it was the granting of the municipal franchise to Paris. They set out in sanguine hope and expectation that the Government would hear reason, and that the Assembly would vote this development of natural liberty, which good republicans advised as a remedy for the revolutionary epidemic in the capital. But, no. Thiers was obstinate in his traditions, and threatened to resign rather than break the bad custom by which the mayor of Paris, and the mayor of every considerable town in France, is a Government nominee. Calling himself the head of a republic, the old

statesman would retain the prerogatives of a dictator, and refused to increase the multitude of the wise in the capital by clothing the simple with responsibility, and infusing into the timid that courage which is derived from being in the exercise of a right and a duty. And what was the result? The immense majority, who respect whatever is called law, stood aside, and did nothing. And the resolute minority, who are a law to themselves, and mean to be a law to the city, took possession of the reins of power, and proceeded to the election of a commune, which represents their own party, but by no fiction can be made to represent Paris. Executive committees were at once appointed, and are already in complete working order. There is no opposition to their decrees, and submission to them involves daily more and more helpless, inoffensive persons in the web of the revolution.

An insurrection in which a third of the population of Paris is engaged cannot be impelled by evil designs of plunder and murder only; but that there are miscreants of the ferocious jacobin type sheltered behind more honest and moderate men is not any longer to be doubted; and for those who remember the past the future is dark with dread. Four days after the murder of General Lecomte and General Clement Thomas, a demonstration of the friends of order, marching unarmed to the Place de Vendôme, was summarily dispersed by a volley from some insurgent guards. Several persons were killed, and many more wounded. The massacre is palliated as an accident, a misunderstanding; but the villains

who ordered it are well aware that such accidents, cow quiet people, and that the friends of order will be deterred from demonstrating any more.

It is impossible that the moiety of Paris in revolt can triumph over France; but blood will flow like water, new animosities will be sown broadcast, and the whole nation will be abased. The fighting dates from the 2nd of this month. The insurgents are in possession of Forts Issy and Vanves, of vast numbers of cannon, and of all the material of war left after the siege. Garibaldi was invited to come and take the command of their forces, but he declined; and the conduct of them is committed to the men who so bitterly troubled the soul of General Trochu by clamouring for more frequent assaults and sorties against the German blockade. Not all have been trained to arms, and none are known to fame as soldiers. Flourens, Blanqui, Duval, Lullier, Bergeret, Eudes and Rossel are the names we have heard. Against them they have Macmahon, chief-in-command of the Versailles army; and Vinoy, who may be expected to make short work of the tactics of amateur generals. The rank and file are mixed of all sorts; of enthusiasts who hate the peace with the Germans, and regard the pursuit of liberty through the wild ways of revolution as a holy cause; of Belleville and Montmartre guards; of reluctant recruits out of work who carry a musket that they may not starve; and of other citizens who find themselves in uniform, and under the flag, and cannot escape the vigilant eye of their commanders. They are said to fight better than

they fought against the Prussians; to fight with more fury and tenacity. Perhaps there is a reason for it. The Prussians did not slaughter their prisoners. Unless they are belied, the Versaillais do.

Colonel Flourens was fortunate—he was killed at Reueil in his first engagement; I say fortunate, because he was a truer man than most of his colleagues are. General Duval was made prisoner the same day at Châtillon, and shot by the roadside—which I take leave to stigmatise as a frightful blunder, and of a most mischievous example. The insurrection may seem to have little excuse now, but it will have a plea before posterity, as having sprung out of the universal dissolution of order occasioned by foreign invasion and a change of rulers in face of the enemy; and whether or no, it is far too extensive to be stamped out by killing in such royal fashion. Panic is horribly cruel, but panic will not be appeased by the shooting of prisoners in cold-blood. If it could take thought for a moment, it would perceive that to other perils it is adding the worst of all perils, the vindictiveness of despair. The law of retaliation comes easy to wicked men for whom there is left no place of repentance; and it should be remembered that innocent Paris, as well as criminal Paris, is now at the mercy of its self-constituted rulers. A government is expected to have more wisdom, discrimination, and self-control than a mob; but the mob-instincts of sudden rage and sudden fear seem from the beginning of this fatal breach to have actuated the counsels of Versailles.

No sign yet of the deliverer France looks for;
no promise in M. Thiers of the man God will raise
to power when He means mercy to the harried
land.

LXXXI.

The Commune.

May 2.

THE red revolution has its way—its little day.
The commune reigns in Paris. International despots
rule its counsels: men who own no country, and
propose, so far as they declare their policy, to
regenerate the world on the principles of Gonzalo's
commonwealth, where all things were to be executed
by contraries; where the old counsellor would admit
no sovereignty or name of magistrate; where—

“Letters should not be known; riches, poverty,
And use of service, none; contract, succession,
Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard, none. . .
No occupation; all men idle, all;
And women too; but innocent and pure. . . .
All things in common nature should produce
Without sweat or endeavour; treason or felony,
Sword, pike, knife, gun, or need of any engine
Would I not have; but nature should bring forth
Of its own kind, all foison, all abundance,
To feed my innocent people.”

Too fine theory runs oft into rank practice, and
the moral of the old play is still a true story. The
social caldron bubbles and boils, and the scum
rises to the surface as it has done in every former

seething of Paris. It is an old tale, and often told, with no element of beauty or grandeur in it. Vice shows its painted face, laughs, and is merry. Blithe, cynical atrocity is gay in its company. Again God is dethroned, again the churches are profaned. Jacobin clubbists rant and blaspheme in the pulpits; and Rochefort, Vermesch and Pyat spread their insidious, deadly venom through the public prints.

How are the "innocent people" misled, deceived, tyrannised over! They want rest and peace. They hate the commune, and the commune is giving them the siege over again, and worse, ten thousand times worse! The bombardment is renewed; there is fighting beyond the gates; and women weep there continually, awaiting the return of their men-folk, living, or dead, or ingloriously crippled. They are of all ranks, for it is not true that the federal army is composed solely of workmen and the dregs of the populace. But never was there a more ignoble strife! Men of one country and kindred tearing and rending each other under the eyes of the enemy who has conquered them all—as if it were a Roman holiday, and they captives, butchered to make sport for the triumph!

And then the ghastly comedy of the council chamber, in obedience to whose decrees the hapless citizens march to destruction! From its creation, the commune has been full of mutual suspicions, hatreds, jealousies, and distrusts. It is only now in the sixth week of its reign, and the members have come to arresting first one, then another, of

their own body. Lullier, the half-crazed sea-captain; Assy, the over-clever working-engineer; Cluseret, the veteran conspirator who has the credit of plotting the Manchester rescue and the Clerkenwell explosion; each in turn goes under lock and key, and after brief seclusion emerges on a changed and ever-changing scene.

Any theory of good and virtue, any moderation there may have been in the early counsels of the revolution, have finally disappeared. Louis Blanc, too ethereal for socialism in full play, has vanished, and Raoult Rigault is the name most familiar in men's mouths—a young profligate turned spy, police-justice; a proper sort of minister for the justice that the commune deals in. These awful powers that be have made a law by which every man shall bear arms against his brother whether he will or no; he shall fight, or if he be refractory he shall die. And another law they have made for the arrest and imprisonment of persons suspected of complicity with Versailles. And a third law they have made for hostages: that three shall be destroyed for every prisoner slaughtered by the Government troops. This is what has come of shooting Duval. Poor hostages! there are scores of them at Mazas and La Roquette: gendarmes, gentlemen, priests, even the Archbishop himself, who exposed his life in the siege like any common soldier. The Lord have mercy upon them; for assuredly the Red Spectre will have none in its day that is approaching.

The very boldest foresee that day, and tremble;

and there is something pathetic in the repeated efforts at conciliation that are made by the citizens not guilty of the revolt. Soon after the appeal to arms, the Republican Union of Paris, which comprises men of the highest professional distinction, men of substance, and men of quality, sent a deputation to Versailles to ask for concessions that might end the civil war. The principal demand was still for the rendering of municipal rights to the great cities; and the pith of the answer they got was that the great cities, and Paris as chief of all, should have such rights as the conservative Assembly might make a law to give her—no more, and no less.

The rebellious heart of the capital refused to be humbled to this; and the fighting went on.

Then the Freemasons made a demonstration, and sent delegates to the Government at Versailles, and to the commune at the Hôtel de Ville, beseeching both to lay down their arms, and seek peace in counsel. As many as 10,000 marched through the streets with their white flags and their watchword, "Vive la Paix!"

Versailles received them coldly; but the poor jaded people had such faith in their influence, that they urged them to go again. It was all to no purpose. Might and mercy are not throned at Versailles, or there would be now a victory with tears only. But the Versaillais army is pushing on and on, and it seems that the men in power, and those who sway their policy, prefer to have the victory with blood.

The amateur generals of the commune have given place to Dombrowski, an alien by his name. He is commandant of Paris, but military affairs march so ill for the insurrection that already a commission of barricades is preparing for the last desperate extremity of battle in the streets.

In time of revolution nothing halts; and the wheel of this revolution revolves with bewildering speed. The men who are bound upon it see their doom already.

"Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die!" is the motto of some.

"If we must die, we will give to Liberty a pile worthy of her!" is the menacing rejoinder of others. As if they had Liberty in league with *them*, wanton tyrants that they are.

LXXXII.

Closing the Net.

May 20.

THEY are preparing for themselves an inextinguishable remorse, those rural sages at Versailles! They seem to be blinded by contemptuous passion to the expedience of clemency, as if the men they are driving to the wall were few and feeble, and of the sort to fold their rags about them, and die with dignity and forbearance! When the sword has wreaked its vengeance, then shall the law strike in to appease justice,—this is the threat which Versailles hurls at the insurgents of Paris; a threat which raises defiance to the highest pitch, and

annuls the fear of death with the last hope of life.

Discouragement and defeat have thinned the ranks of the Federals of all save faithful believers in the creed of the revolution. But they are thousands, and they go through their day's work of fighting with admirable courage. The commune is disappearing by degrees, as its chances of success disappear. The sharp thorn of hunger pricks the populace, and the miserable existence they lead is enough to drive them mad. Their poverty may consent to deeds their will would deny; and the sober citizens stand cowed into stupid helplessness, anticipating an awful massacre at the close, and that half the city will be laid in ruins. All with means to escape have fled, to the number of 400,000; and their alarm is not surprising. Everybody in possession of powder or petroleum was lately ordered to surrender it to the authorities; but whether this decree was for the prevention or the accumulation of danger is a mystery. Considering who the authorities are, the signal points to danger.

If the history of former insurrections and revolutions in France was forgotten, we should not wonder so much at the despotic policy of Versailles. But Thiers knows the fiendish capacity for mischief in the Paris mob, and all its sanguinary possibilities for revenge when at bay. He knows that the Archbishop and others, taken by the commune as hostages, lie verily in the shadow of death, and that come its extremity, they will surely be destroyed. If we did not remember what has been,

we might perhaps laugh at what is; laugh at the mock-heroic ceremonial of arming the women enrolled to fight at the barricades; laugh at the cautious retreat of prudent men who have got a glimpse of what the end will be, and find themselves too faint-hearted to go through with it. But we are sure these women will be very wild cats for ferocity when their blood is up; and that the retreat of men of scruples signifies the remitting of all power into the hands of men of no scruples. And this is what the commune has dwindled to; to Déléscluze for dictator, and a committee of its most rabid members, who call themselves, O ominous name! a Committee of Public Safety.

Under their ruthless sway the work of destruction, long planned and often threatened, has begun in earnest. The Column of Vendôme lies prone and broken in the bed of mire prepared to receive its record of imperial glories. The house of M. Thiers has been demolished, and the chapel erected over the burial-place of the royal victims of the Great Revolution is condemned. The shadows lengthen; the day grows short. What the commune would do it must do quickly. The Versaillais are closing the net that not one Red may escape. And the Germans, to make surety double sure, have strengthened their guard, and got ready to rush in and finish the bloody business if the Versaillais cannot.

Men die but once. What motive is left to malignity to refrain from accomplishing its perfect work?

LXXXIII.

The Red Spectre is King.

"MAKE room for the people, the real combatants, the bare-arms! The hour of the revolutionary war has struck."

This was the key-note of the last proclamation of Déléscluze and the Committee of Public Safety issued from the Hôtel de Ville. The military defence was over. The guards were withdrawn from the ramparts. The chiefs of the commune had made their cast for power, and had lost it. They were condemned to die; but they could not face death singly, like heroes of a good conscience—they must needs call on the people to come out and die with them. And the people, better couraged than they, came out with ferocious joy, and for a seven days' reign of terror the Red Spectre was king.

There is not a more brutal chapter in history. It reminds us of the bloody St. Bartholomew of religious fanaticism; and as the old Chancellor de l'Hôpital prayed that that execrable day might perish for ever, so may old Thiers and old Louis Blanc pray that this hideous week of political fanaticism may be blotted out of the book of national remembrance.

There was no faltering in the counsels on either side.

At Versailles the belief had been encouraged that the Reds were a mere handful of scoundrels whom it was possible and justifiable to destroy like a brood of noxious vermin caught in a trap. The fearful, fugitive folk were earnest to declare that peace and safety in Paris there could be none until these socialists were annihilated. M. Thiers is called a merciful man; but he left the hands of his generals free, and when they undertook to crush the communists it was with the stern instinct of soldiers pitted against rebels, and the scorn of gentlemen pitted against roughs.

But the sinister fanatics of the commune who had the roughs at command were not an enemy to be despised. With all the method conceivable they planned their exit from the stage of revolution that it should be a triumph, and a costly triumph. Raoult Rigault was charged with the execution of the decree against the hostages. As Rochefort was of their counsels, they probably had in their possession his system of barricades prepared against the Prussians; for they made the streets ready to dispute them every inch. They had moreover all the combustible stuff collected by the Committee of Defence, and all the experience gathered before the siege for applying it to its destructive uses. The sewers, cellars, and vaults in the condemned quarters were charged with gunpowder, and the walls and staircases of the palaces and public buildings were saturated with petroleum. Under four principal leaders, Millière, Dereure, Billioray, and Venisier, were distributed some five hundred fusee-bearers,

and an army of incendiaries enlisted from the refuse of the populace, lost women, pale prison lads, and haggard convicts returned from the galleys. These miserables were to disperse themselves through the streets, and as the bare-arms, the amazons, and the guards were killed or driven from barricade to barricade, they were to set fire to the grand edifices in the streets that were abandoned, and to drop explosive substances into any available aperture of houses marked to be burnt. As their fathers had killed for hire at the gates of the prisons in the days of the old terror, so these miscreants were to have a wage of ten francs apiece for every dwelling they added to the general conflagration with which the commune proposed to celebrate and glorify its death.

It was on Sunday, the 21st of May, that Délécluze issued his appeal to the barricades-men and veterans of '48. And it was on the same day that an officer of the Versailles army made accidental discovery that the ramparts were abandoned, and that there was free entrance to the city by the gate of St. Cloud. He spread the intelligence, and the Government troops, mustered in haste, found that there was nothing to hinder them from following his lead. All that night Macmahon, Ducrot, Vinoy, and other commanders, were bringing in their men by three routes, and in the morning there were 80,000 within the walls, and pushing up the main avenues from the south and west. They set the tricolour on the Arc-de-Triomphe in the room of the red flag; but hardly had they done so, when a

tremendous explosion at the powder-magazine on the quay of Passy unfurled the revolutionary banner again in a lurid cloud of fire and smoke, and a sanguinary panic took instant possession of the city.

Till this moment the troops had encountered little resistance; the resistance was preparing elsewhere. But now shells began to fly from both sides; and there was severe fighting in the Champs de Mars and the Champs Elysées. And, for a portent, there were twelve federals who had surrendered as prisoners, lying on the pavement in the Avenue de Marigny, summarily executed. An officer grievously wounded, said to be Dombrowski, presented himself at the German lines, and asked permission to pass, but was denied. Also a body of insurgent guards, nine hundred strong, who arrived with the same petition, were forced back. The old proverb which counsels men to build a golden bridge for a flying enemy was not remembered by the military politicians of Versailles, for it is to be supposed that the Germans acted in deference to them. The word ran at once through the streets that the soldiers gave no quarter, and the insurgents braced themselves to sell life for life. And at the Hôtel de Ville Déléscluze and the Committee of Public Safety signed their final decrees for the carrying out of that stupendous treason against their country by which they have recorded their names amongst the tyrants who have been strong only to do mischief, the basest and meanest of mankind.

On Tuesday night there was a great massacre

of gendarmes detained as hostages in the prison of St. Pélagie, and the palace of the Tuileries burst into flames.

The Government, so dull, so slow of apprehension, must have begun to suspect, at last, that the intention of the Red chiefs was to burn Paris, and that they had not gone the best way to circumvent them. But the consequences of past weakness and present precipitancy were not to be averted. The conspirators had had time to mature their whole plot, and to find agents wicked enough to execute it.

Intense anxiety was felt for the fate of the Archbishop and his companions in prison; and the fighting at the barricades which stopped the approaches to the centre of the insurrection waxed terrible through the Wednesday. But before any of them could be taken fires broke out simultaneously at the Louvre, the Hôtel de Ville, the Palais de Justice, the Palais Royal, the Ministry of Finance, and many other splendid and precious edifices of old royal and imperial Paris. The river ran red with fiery reflections; the city glowed like a furnace; the sun could not penetrate the thick vapour of smoke that rose from its burning. The roar of cannon, the crash of musketry, were incessant. The soldiers had not admired their work in contemplation, but they warmed to it fast, and did it with a will. Then were horrible things to be seen in the streets. With the bare-arms had come out the furies of revolution, to kill and be killed in savage despair; and with the furies had come out the children, boys of Prince

Loulou's age, eager as any prince to learn the bloody traditions of their fathers.

Day after day and night after night the bitter struggle went on, and the burning of the city went on; the madness and fury deepening at every pace that was lost and gained. The troops won Mazas only to find that the hostages had been carried to La Roquette; and when they took La Roquette on Saturday, they were too late. The Archbishop and his brethren had been dead three days, foully murdered on the evening when the conflagration of the city was begun. They had been shot in the court-yard of the prison by wretches brought in from the street, the guards refusing to have the guilt of that innocent blood upon their heads.

The insurgents made their last stand in the cemetery of Père-la-Chaise. On the Monday afternoon their stronghold was invested and forced, and to the echoes of what then ensued humanity shuts its ears.

The following day three hundred insurgents in Fort Vincennes surrendered at discretion, and Marshal Macmahon addressed a proclamation to the inhabitants that Paris was delivered. And the inhabitants went out in the sunshine to look at the ruins, and found their beautiful city all defaced with fire, and desolate as a charnel-house!

LXXXIV.

The Cost of it.

M. THIERS says it was a "glorious campaign," but the soldiers look very sad. The day after the battle is come, and they understand that it is their brothers and sisters they have been slaughtering.

We shall never see Paris again in her beauty as she used to be; never think of her again as the city of delight. When the graves are closed, when the dead are buried out of sight, we shall not forget that they lie under the pavement, under the green pleasure-gardens where we walk. The old landmarks are removed, the old palaces are blackened ruins, and ghosts innumerable flit through the deserted booths of Vanity Fair.

It is too late to consider now whether the plague of the commune might not have been stayed before it infected so many of the innocent people; too late to consider whether the awful massacre at the end might not have been averted by the declaration of an amnesty when the Versailles entered the city, to all insurgents who laid down their arms, except the murderers of the two generals on the 18th of March.

The thing is done. The cost is counted.

The Versailles reckon themselves diminished by

6000. But the Reds of Paris are diminished by 50,000:—lawful victims in the fighting, 6000; victims by summary execution, 8000; wounded and hiding in the Catacombs to starve and die, 5000; prisoners, 32,000. To the prisoners the victors add daily by fresh arrests, and reduce them again by slaughter. The Marquis de Gallifet, in his tender mercy, put eighty-three out of their pain by the wayside on the road to Versailles—aged, weak, or disabled persons, who could not keep up with the rest on the march. Courts-martial are sitting *en permanence* at Versailles, and doing panic-justice at a prodigious rate. Under pressure of fright, horror, and of the magnanimous brave friends of order, it is impossible for the judges to stay and discriminate between innocent and guilty; and men are shot by dozens at a time, and sent off in batches of a thousand a day to the hulks at Cherbourg and Brest. The most logical conclusion would be to sink them all in the deep sea. And nothing seems wanting to do it but audacity.

These are the mean, mixed multitude of the commune; but what of its chiefs?

Where those hoary apostles of socialism, Ledru Rollin, Victor Hugo, and Louis Blanc vanished to when the storm burst, I cannot hear. They did not stay to weather it in Paris, but left their young disciples and the common crew to be wrecked by themselves. M. Félix Pyat also abandoned the sinking ship, and secured his escape in time. But Déléscluze, Dombrowski, Millièrre, Rigault, Cluseret, Billioray, Vermorel, and others who stood by it, are

reported dead. Rochefort, that twig of decayed nobility, whose pen pointed the way to the most malevolent acts of the commune, lies in prison, with other members whose flight was intercepted; men of all degrees of guilt, from Ferré, who presided at the murder of the Archbishop, to Rossel, an able young officer of engineers, promoted by Gambetta, who revolted against the peace as violently as his patron, and throwing up his commission in the army, joined the Reds in Paris under some wild delusion that they would save the independence of their country.

Romantic imagination will endeavour before long to invest the chiefs of the commune with the halo of superior patriotism, of virtuous fanaticism; but the publicity of modern times will be against it. Taking them for all in all, never was there a more trivial crew. To the despatchfulness of bold wicked men they united the cowardice of traitors, and are only not insignificant by the horrible and cruel mischief they have done.

The foreign adventurers were the best of them; the young native jacobins, bred to law and medicine, and turned to seditious journalism, the worst. From first to last there is not one figure of heroic dignity amongst them. Jourde might have done his country service with his good head for finance; Rossel might have done her service with his sword; they and a few others. But for passion they have thrown away usefulness, life, and honour; and have inscribed their names on the same scroll with the assassins and incendiaries who have given to France

a much harder thrust down the steep slope of decadence than the Germans gave her. From foreign invasion and defeat she might have rallied: but how shall she stand when her foes are they of her own house, and her children hate one another with the bitterness of death?

LXXXV.

At Cross Purposes.

LOOKING behind us all the course of time appears to run smoothly, as if an infallible necessity had ruled the sequence of events. But as we stand, and see events pass, it is impossible to refrain from imagining how they might have fallen out otherwise, and better. There must be some sound part in France, though so much is rotten! What simple, natural hearts and lives we have known there! How calmly, as Christians and gentlemen, died the hostages! with what valour the bare-arms and the amazons! To live simply, to die bravely, are not strange to this people, and yet they seem in a way to perish by the leaven of moral poison that is in them.

Oh! if now there were a man in France who could make her hear that she has had enough of blood; that her riotous appetite grows by what it feeds on; that, if she would not fall to the lowest place amongst nations, she must take the place to which she is

reduced, let her wounds heal, let the grass grow over her graves, and learn to work hard and live humbly!

But what do we hear? The old voices that have ever flattered her flatter her still, wooing her and beguiling her with promises of revenge, of honour restored, and glory re-gilded. Imperialists, royalists, Orleanists aspire to govern and guide her; but not one, any more than the men in power, dares to speak the truth of her condition. And she distrusts them all; for in her soul she knows it—knows that she will never renew her strength by fighting for revenge, or redeem her honour by rebelling against her shame. It is sad that crippled as she is, and wasted and worn with emotions, no counsellor is honest enough to tell her that to live she must rest. Instead, her counsellors tell her that she shall to the battle again the very hour she can bear it; and so the chafe and excitement are kept up, and until the hour come, she does not live, she only suffers.

And when the hour strikes? We shrink from looking forward. France is a present danger that it behoves all nations to have a care of. And not ourselves the least.

LXXXVI.

June 17.

WE have had a few fine days this year; but so few that we might almost count them. With the violets of March there was soft, rare sunshine; but with April returned the cold winds and rains of winter, and held sway till the cuckoo came; May was very chary of her beauty, and as for June—but for the full green leaves upon the trees, we might call it Christmas.

Did the skies smile yesterday upon the German triumph in Berlin? Five hundred thousand soldiers of the Fatherland were to march into the city, with all the glorious array of victors come home; with their captured trophies; with trumpets sounding, bells ringing, flags flying, and tears and mourning put out of sight for the holiday. They have done valiantly, and wear their laurels without boasting. Honour to them, therefore, brave, patriotic nation, and a long, long reign of blessed peace!

LXXXVII.

The Year's End.

July 15.

THE echoes of the fight for the championship of Europe have died away into the infinite past, have joined the old silences. The fight is over. Germany has sung her victory. France has wept tears of blood for her defeat. And the workaday world spins on! Great Bismarck redoubles his labours; old Thiers redoubles his. No rest for the men who govern men until they rest in God!

"Fritz" has not come to the toil of it yet. His head will not lie so easy when he wears the imperial crown. He is in England with his wife, the eldest daughter of England, and their children, for a cheerful change and relaxation after the awful, dull monotony of war.

How strange it seems! The great actors on the stage of great events take shadowy, heroic proportions. All the way through my dispersed meditations "Fritz" has been as unrealised to me as any warrior of ancient story.

Yet, behold, we might be walking in our summer-green lanes, or along the resounding shore, and meet that hero of heroes, rounding with a simple holiday this famous year of the German Empire restored.

The Famous Year is ended. But it is not Peace that reigns in Europe, though War has ceased. Nor is it the preparation of Peace.

German unity has burst forth. The greatness of France is dead. Thus, fulfilling the forecast of Prevost-Paradol, closes the prelude of the supreme struggle. But he saw further. The tragedy of his vision played out is the extinction of France as a nation.

Is it to be played out?

THE END.

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